# POINTS OF CHURCH LAW, MYSTICISM, AND MORALITY

REV. T. SLATER, S.J.

# POINTS OF CHURCH LAW, MYSTICISM, AND MORALITY

# POINTS OF CHURCH LAW, MYSTICISM, AND MORALITY

BY REV. T. SLATER, S.J.

*Author of "A Manual of Moral Theology," "Questions in Moral Theology," "Christ and Evolution," etc.*

#5831

260.4
S631
Col

Property of
CBF
Please return to
Graduate Theological
Union Library

STUD.
F. M.
FORNIA

P. J. KENEDY AND SONS
44 BARCLAY STREET, NEW YORK
1924

NIHIL OBSTAT:
JAMES BRIDGE, S.J.

IMPRIMI POTEST:
GULIELMUS BODKIN, S.J.

IMPRIMATUR:
✠ FRIDERICUS GUL.
*Archiep. Liverpol.*

*Made and Printed in Great Britain*

# PREFACE

THE canon law of the Church affects Catholic laymen as well as the clergy. It lays down his spiritual duties and rights, and no serious Catholic layman is indifferent to them. He should be acquainted with them and with the changes which have been made by the new Code of Canon Law. With a view to helping the layman to gain the necessary knowledge of the law of the Church on such points as specially affect himself, I have selected a number of subjects and stated the law of the Church bearing on them as briefly and as clearly as I could. These short chapters give its title to my little book.

I have added two or three other papers which I hope will be of interest to the reader. I am grateful to Dr. Colvin for allowing his excellent address to appear among these.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/pointsofchurchla0000revt

# CONTENTS


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | FASTING AND ABSTINENCE | 1 |
| II. | RECKONING OF TIME | 5 |
| III. | PARISH DUTIES AND RIGHTS | 9 |
| IV. | PROPERTY RIGHTS OF PARISH PRIESTS | 13 |
| V. | TAKING PART IN NON-CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONS | 21 |
| VI. | THE NEW CODE AND CIVIL LAW | 25 |
| VII. | BAPTISM | 35 |
| VIII. | CONFIRMATION | 39 |
| IX. | HOLY COMMUNION | 43 |
| X. | FREQUENT COMMUNION | 48 |
| XI. | THE MASS PRO POPULO | 55 |
| XII. | FORGIVENESS OF SIN | 66 |
| XIII. | APOSTOLIC INDULGENCES | 70 |
| XIV. | THE CONFESSOR'S STANDARD OF MORALITY | 75 |
| XV. | EXTREME UNCTION | 84 |
| XVI. | HOLY ORDERS | 88 |
| XVII. | A PRIEST'S BLESSING | 93 |
| XVIII. | MINISTRATION OF SACRAMENTS TO NON-CATHOLICS | 97 |
| XIX. | EXCOMMUNICATION | 106 |
| XX. | THE CHRISTIAN HOME | 111 |

CHAPTER PAGE
XXI. PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE - - 115
XXII. MARRIAGE WITH UNBAPTIZED PERSONS - 120
XXIII. MARRIAGE BEFORE THE CATHOLIC PRIEST 124
XXIV. MARRIAGE IN THE PROTESTANT CHURCH - 129
XXV. AFFINITY AND PUBLIC DECENCY - 133
XXVI. SOCIETIES, SECRET AND OTHER - - 137
XXVII. THE MYSTICS' QUEST - - - 142
XXVIII. MYSTICISM, FALSE AND TRUE - - 154
XXIX. THE BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION OF SAINTS - - - - 170
XXX. CATHOLICS AND SEX PROBLEMS - - 177
XXXI. PROGRESS - - - - 185

# POINTS OF CHURCH LAW

## CHAPTER I

### FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

GOOD Catholics are careful to observe the law of the Catholic Church. They are fully aware that she received from her divine Founder authority to make laws and regulations for the good of their souls. They also know that such positive laws as the Church has made in the past, though suitable and beneficial at the time when they were made, may in process of time become less suitable and beneficial on account of changed circumstances. Hence they are quite prepared for changes in the positive law of the Church; such changes, they know, have frequently been made in the past.

Many changes of considerable importance were made in the positive law of the Church by the issue of the Code of Canon Law a few years ago. Those changes began to take effect at Whitsuntide, May 19, 1918. At that time the world was still embroiled in the Great War, and, perhaps, sufficient attention could not be given to the changes made by the Church in her discipline. Even yet many Catholics have

only hazy notions about points of importance in the existing law of the Church. It will not be unacceptable to good Catholic laymen if we endeavour to summarize some few points of the existing discipline of the Church. In the following paragraphs we will take the existing law of fasting and abstinence. We do not propose to deal with the whole law of fasting and abstinence. Catholics know that sufficiently already. It will suit our present purpose better to dwell on such changes as the new Code of Canon Law has introduced into the Church's law of fasting and abstinence.

Lent used to begin on Ash Wednesday and last till midnight on Holy Saturday. Sundays in Lent were days of abstinence unless leave were given to eat meat on them.

Now Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, but it ends at midday on Holy Saturday. After twelve o'clock, therefore, on Holy Saturday at noon the faithful are neither bound to fast nor abstain on that day. The Sundays in Lent are no longer days of abstinence.

We should distinguish carefully between the law of fasting and abstinence. Occasionally one hears it said: " I forgot the fast on Friday "—when abstinence is meant. Some seem to think that because the law of fasting only binds between the ages of twenty-one and sixty, therefore the law of abstinence only binds between the same ages. The law of the Church is that all who have reached the age of seven

are bound to abstain throughout their lives unless excused by some special reason.

The law of fasting allows only one full meal in the twenty-four hours. Quite commonly, now, flesh meat may be eaten at that full meal. But the law of abstinence does not limit the number of meals. It does not affect the quantity of food, but only the quality. It used to forbid the flesh of animals that live and breathe on land. The whole animal was forbidden food on a day of abstinence, so that not only flesh, suet, meat soup, extract of meat, but also rendered fat, dripping, and lard were forbidden.

The new Code has made a change in this matter. Canon 1250 tells us that the law of abstinence forbids the eating of flesh meat and of soup made from flesh meat, but that it does not forbid eggs, white meats (*lacticinia*), nor the rendered fat of animals taken by way of condiment. All extracts of meat will come under the prohibition, and suet, which is unrendered fat and counts as flesh meat. But milk, butter, cheese, whey, dripping, and lard are allowed on days of abstinence to those who are bound to abstain. There is no difficulty, therefore, in eating potatoes fried in fat, or fish cooked with batter or fat, or toast steeped in lard, on a Friday.

It used to be a part of the law of fasting, not only in Lent but throughout the year, that fish and flesh meat could not be eaten at the same meal on a day of fasting. It bound even those who were not obliged to

fast. This rule has been abolished by Canon 1251, § 2. So that now on a fasting day, when flesh meat is allowed, fasters and non-fasters may take fish and flesh meat at the same meal if they choose to do so.

The same Canon 1251, § 2, expressly allows those who fast to take their collation after midday and their full meal in the evening, if they choose to do so, in preference to taking their full meal after midday and their collation in the evening.

## CHAPTER II

### RECKONING OF TIME

A PRIEST once began an instruction to children on fasting from midnight before Holy Communion by putting the question: "Well, children, and when is it twelve o'clock?" All hands went up at once, and the answer was given quite confidently: "It is twelve o'clock when the two hands of the clock are together at the number XII." "Well, but in our house there are half a dozen clocks, and the hands of the different clocks are never together at the number XII at the same time," answered the priest. "So, when is it twelve o'clock?" This time no hands went up, and a puzzled expression came over the faces of the children. In truth, as Ecclesiastes says: "All things are hard." The commonest notions seem to be as clear as crystal until we begin to think, and then difficulties begin to appear. This is true with regard to the notion of time; it is quite simple until we begin to think. But we have no intention of trying to clear up philosophical or chronological difficulties about time. Our aim is wholly practical. When is it twelve o'clock? is for

us a purely practical question. Catholics have to fast from midnight before going to Holy Communion, and so they should know when it is midnight. They have to abstain from flesh meat on Fridays, and Friday begins at twelve o'clock and ends at twelve o'clock. To regulate the affairs of ordinary civil life we are accustomed in Great Britain to follow Greenwich time, and in summer our clocks are put forward one hour. These conventions work smoothly as far as ordinary civil life is concerned. But are we obliged to conform to these civil conventions in matters affecting the practice of our religion? In summer especially this may be a very practical question. A Catholic is detained at business late at night on Saturday. He gets home just as the clock strikes twelve. He intended to go to Holy Communion on Sunday morning. He remembers that it is only eleven o'clock by Greenwich time. May he take his supper and go to Holy Communion in the morning, or must he abstain from Holy Communion if he takes his supper? Canon 33 of the Code of Canon Law gives the rule for settling such questions as this.

*Canon* 33.

In reckoning the hours of the day the common local usage must be followed; but in the private celebration of Mass, in the private recitation of the Breviary, in receiving Holy Communion, and in the observance of the law of fasting and abstinence,

although the usual computation of time in the place may be different, anyone may follow either the local time, whether true or mean, or the legal time, whether zone time or other extraordinary time.

In this canon the Church has given us a practical rule by the application of which we can settle our doubts as to when we must begin to fast or abstain. Let us make sure that we understand it clearly. In general, the canon tells us, we must follow the common local usage in reckoning time. The town hall clock or the clock of the principal church will tell us when it is twelve o'clock and time to begin our fast. But we are not bound to follow the common local usage when there is question only of receiving Holy Communion or of the personal observance of the laws of fasting and abstinence. On these occasions the Church gives us an option. Unless there is some good reason for acting otherwise, we shall do well to keep to the common local usage; the absence of fixed rule might lead to looseness of practice. But if we have any good reason, we may, without scruple, make use of the option permitted us by the Church. She allows us to follow the true or the mean local time instead of the common local usage. Here at Liverpool, for example, the common local usage is to follow Greenwich time. A gun tells all the city when it is one o'clock by Greenwich time. Local time is about twelve minutes behind Greenwich

time, and true local time is settled by the true sun crossing our meridian; it is then twelve o'clock by true local time. Although the earth makes one revolution on its axis every day in the same time, yet, because it moves round the sun and because it is inclined to the ecliptic, the interval between the sun crossing the meridian of a place on one day and on the next is not the same as a revolution of the earth on its axis, and it varies according to the time of the year. This has led to the device of a mean sun, a fictitious sun, which is supposed always from day to day to cross the meridian at equal intervals of time. The canon allows us to reckon our time by this mean sun if we like. Time is now fixed by law. In Great Britain, and in most countries throughout the world, the law prescribes that zone time should be observed. This is varied in the summer months by putting on the clock for one hour, so that we may enjoy the benefit of more daylight for our working hours. The canon permits us, but it does not compel us, to follow any one of these recognized methods of reckoning time. So that on any particular night, if it is not yet twelve o'clock according to any one of these recognized ways of computing time, I may take something to eat and drink and go to Holy Communion next morning, and that, although it may be past twelve o'clock according to the other ways of reckoning time.

## CHAPTER III

### PARISH DUTIES AND RIGHTS

SOME duties and rights of importance flow as consequences from the fact of belonging to a certain parish. I am not dealing with civil, but with religious duties and rights. Parishes have a long and interesting history. In the early ages of the Church they did not exist. The zeal of bishops and priests was not confined to certain districts; they preached the Gospel and administered the sacraments to the people with whom they came in contact. Those who know the life of St Wilfrid of York will remember how he devoted his energies to the evangelization of Mercia when he was driven out of his own diocese, and to that of the Frisians when he happened to be driven on to their coasts. But the incidents of his stormy life show that the want of system which then prevailed had its disadvantages. The more strong and zealous a bishop or priest was, the more necessary was it that his zeal should be confined within definite limits, otherwise it would do more harm than good.

The delimitation of dioceses and parishes in

England was a part of the work done for the Church in England by that great organizer of the seventh century, Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury. During the following centuries the country was gradually divided into parishes, but the task was not completed till the reign of Edward III, in the fourteenth century. After the great apostasy the Catholic Church in England had to begin afresh. New dioceses were created, and these were at first divided up into missions governed by missionary priests. After the new Code of Canon Law came into force these missions were raised to the status of parishes presided over by parish priests. Now, therefore, the Catholic Church in England has its own parishes, governed according to the canon law of the Catholic Church. "To what parish do I belong?" and "What are my duties and rights as a parishioner?" are, therefore, practical questions for a Catholic layman. I cannot settle the question of what parish I belong to by the locality of my place of business if I do not live there. Nor can I choose what parish I like. I may habitually go to St Giles's on Sunday to hear Mass, but that fact does not make St Giles's my parish church. The parish to which I belong is settled by the law of the Church, and the law of the Church has decided that a man's parish is that in which he habitually lives, that in which his home is situated, that in which he has a domicile or a quasi-domicile, to use the technical terms of the law. One

who has no fixed place of abode belongs for the time being to the parish in which he happens to be staying. My parish priest, then, and my parish church are settled for me by the locality of my habitual place of dwelling.

I have certain definite obligations to fulfil towards my parish priest and my parish church:

(*a*) If I am a married man and have children, I must have them taken to the parish church to be baptized by the parish priest. Baptism is a parochial Sacrament whose administration as a general rule belongs to the parish priest of the parents of the child. It is in the parish church that the registers of baptism of the parishioners are kept. Even if a child is born outside the limits of the parish to which its parents belong it should be taken to their parish church for baptism if this can be done easily and without delay. Otherwise any parish priest within his own parish may baptize such a child.

(*b*) If I am ill and want the priest it is not the right thing to pass over my parish priest and send for another. I may, indeed, ask another priest to hear my confession, as Confession is not a parochial Sacrament and the Church allows me to confess to any priest who has faculties. But if I want Viaticum or Extreme Unction I must apply to my parish priest, as these are parochial Sacraments.

(*c*) It is not a matter of strict precept, but only of counsel, to make one's Easter Communion in the

parish church; but one who has made it elsewhere should inform his parish priest of the fact.

(*d*) Banns of marriage should be proclaimed in the parish church or churches of the parties. The parish priest of the bride has the right to celebrate the marriage and to give the nuptial blessing.

(*e*) The parish priest has the right to bless the houses of his parishioners on Holy Saturday where this is the custom.

(*f*) Finally, parishioners according to their means are bound to contribute to the support of their parish priests, to the upkeep of the parish church and schools, and to the maintenance of religion. This obligation should be fulfilled even by those who use the liberty granted by the Church of hearing Mass and being present at other functions in other than their own parish church.

## CHAPTER IV

### PROPERTY RIGHTS OF PARISH PRIESTS

A PARISH priest has a double personality. He is a physical person, and when he became a parish priest he retained the rights and duties of other physical persons in as far as they are compatible with his office as a parish priest. Among other rights he retained the natural right of owning property. He may be the owner of lands and houses, and he may have large sums of money invested or safely deposited with his banker. The fact that he is now a parish priest does not prevent him from adding to his wealth. He may succeed to the wealth of relatives by inheritance; he may accept bequests, gifts, and presents; he may earn money by writing for the Press. The stipends which are offered him for Mass are his own property by the immemorial custom of the Church, and the new Code of Canon Law forbids the bishop to levy any tax on manual or funded Masses (Can. 1506). He has, moreover, a right to decent support from the income of his parish, even if he has money of his own (Can. 1473). He is not bound to serve in the army of the Church at his own expense; and if he chooses to live frugally

and save something out of what he might without blame have spent on his decent maintenance, his savings in this way become his personal property. The parish priest may dispose of his personal property just as he pleases, provided that he acts honestly. Of course, he must pay his debts; but when he has done that, he may do what he likes with his own.

A parish priest has also a moral personality by virtue of his office; it is his duty to represent his parish and to act as the guardian and administrator of its property. The new Code is very explicit concerning the right of the Church to own property:

The Catholic Church and the Apostolic See have an inborn right freely and independently of the civil authority to acquire, retain, and administer temporal goods for the attainment of the ends proper to themselves (Can. 1495).

This is true not only of the universal Church, but also of particular churches, as the second section of the same canon lays down:

Individual churches and other moral persons which have been made juridical persons by ecclesiastical authority have the right according to the sacred canons of acquiring, retaining, and administering temporal goods.

The Church also has the right [we read in Can. 1496], independently of the civil power, of exacting from the faithful what is necessary for divine worship,

for the decent support of the clergy and other ministers, and for other purposes proper to itself.

Besides having the right to levy contributions on the faithful, the Church can acquire property like other persons, physical and moral, by all just means, whether of natural or positive law, as is laid down in Canon 1499. The same canon tells us who the immediate owner of church property is. It is not the Pope, although the Holy See has the supreme authority of administration over it; but the owner of church property is that moral person which lawfully acquired it. The Catholic parish, then, is the owner of the church property which it has lawfully acquired in the past or which may be given to it in the future. Nowadays the Catholic parish is seldom the owner of broad acres or of real estate to any considerable extent. Still it is usually the owner of the parish church, of the presbytery, of the Catholic or parish schools, and often even of the ground on which they are built. It is not uncommon for the parish to own a farm or two, or a house or two besides the church buildings. But most of the parish property will usually consist of the offerings of the faithful. The general principle is that, according to ecclesiastical law and the intention of the donors, all offerings made by the faithful for church purposes and not for the personal benefit of the parish priest are church property. We may mention especially collections made at the offertory, bench or pew rents, collections

at special sermons like school sermons, outdoor collections, whist-drives, concerts, to which Dr. Smith adds picnics and excursions in the United States.* Of all such parish property the parish priest is the administrator by ecclesiastical law, unless some modification of this plan has been sanctioned by competent authority. Canon 1182 of the new Code bears on this point:

§ 1. While what is prescribed in Canons 1519-1528 must be faithfully observed, the administration of property which is destined for the repair and decoration of a church and for the maintenance of divine worship in the same, unless otherwise determined by special title or lawful custom, belongs to the bishop and his chapter, if there is question of the cathedral church; to the chapter of a collegiate church, if there is question of a collegiate church; to the rector, if there is question of another church.

§ 2. The parish priest or the missionary also administers the offerings made for the benefit of a parish or mission, or of a church situated within the limits of a parish or mission, unless there is question of a church which has an administration of its own distinct from the administration of the parish or mission, or unless a special law or legitimate custom determine otherwise.

§ 3. The parish priest, missionary, or rector of a secular church, whether he be a secular or religious, ought to administer these offerings in accordance with

* *Compendium jur. can.*, n. 972.

the sacred canons and render an account of them to the Ordinary of the place in accordance with Canon 1525.

In Canons 1519-1528, referred to above, rules are given for the guidance of the administrator of church property in the discharge of his office. The parish priest is subject to them, but we need not give them here. It will be sufficient to call attention to what is prescribed in Canon 1523, 4°:

With the consent of the Ordinary the administrator ought to invest for the benefit of his church any money belonging to the church which remains over after expenses have been defrayed, and which can be invested profitably.

A parish constitutes the parish priest's benefice, which is thus defined in Canon 1409:

An ecclesiastical benefice is a juridical entity, constituted or erected *in perpetuum* by competent authority, consisting of a sacred office and of the right to receive the income from the dowry annexed to the office.

According to Canon 1410 the dowry of a benefice consists either of goods the ownership of which lies with the juridical entity itself, of fixed payments due from some family or moral person, or fixed and voluntary offerings of the faithful which belong to the rector of the benefice, or stole fees, as they are called, within the limits of the diocesan tax or of lawful custom, or choral distributions, with the

exception of a third part of them if all the income of the benefice consists of choral distributions.

Canon 1473 has already been referred to above. It provides that, although a beneficiary may have other property which does not come from his benefice, he may freely use and enjoy the fruits of his benefice which are necessary for his decent support; but he is under the obligation of spending what is over and above on the poor or on pious causes.

A rather delicate question emerges from the careful consideration of these canons. According to Canon 1410 stole fees may constitute the dowry of a benefice. If they do, they are ecclesiastical property, which the beneficiary has a right to use for his decent support and maintenance; but he must give to the poor or to pious causes anything that remains over and above what he requires for his personal support. This is the opinion of Canon Bargilliat in his recently issued book, *Droits et Devoirs des Curés* (p. 398):

Aux termes du Canon 1410, tout ce que le Droit appelle *jus stolae*, c'est-à-dire, ce qui revient au curé en raison de son titre curial, est considéré comme revenu du bénéfice, et rentre par conséquent dans les biens dont le superflu ne doit pas être laissé aux héritiers, mais doit être employé au soulagement des pauvres ou à l'entretien des œuvres pies.

On the other hand, by common law before the issue of the new Code stole fees belonged to the parish priest. The Sacred Penitentiary on August 9,

1824, replied in answer to a question that the offerings of the faithful were not to be regarded as the fruits of a parish priest's benefice. In the Second Council of Westminster among the rules concerning ecclesiastical property occurs the following: "The proceeds derived from [stole fees] should be ordinarily considered to belong to the priests; though they are distributed in different ways in different places. That distribution seems to be the best which is most conducive to alleviate the burdens of the mission." Of the United States Dr. Smith writes: "Bishops in this country are exhorted to establish with the advice of their priests an equitable way of apportioning these offerings among the priests residing in the same house, taking into consideration the chief claim as well as the graver duties of the pastor."*

Is this latter view, that stole fees are the perquisites of the parish priest, to be shared or not by him with his assistant priests according to custom and diocesan regulations, rendered obsolete by the new Code of Canon Law? I think not. On the contrary, Canon 463 seems to confirm it. That canon is as follows:

§ 1. The parish priest has a right to the dues (*praestationes*) which either approved custom or lawful taxation in accordance with Canon 1507, § 1, gives him.

§ 2. One who exacts more is bound to make restitution.

* *Elements of Ecclesiastical Law*, i, n. 606.

§ 3. Although a parish duty may have been fulfilled by another, nevertheless the dues belong to the parish priest unless it is certain that the intention of the donors was different concerning the sum which exceeds the tax.

§ 4. Let the parish priest not refuse free ministrations to those who cannot pay.

It is clear from the context of this canon that it refers especially to stole fees. This is also plain from Canon 1507, § 1, which is quoted in the first section. There it is prescribed that the amount of the taxes to be paid on occasion of the ministration of the sacraments and sacramentals must be fixed by the provincial synod, or by a meeting of the bishops for the whole province, with the previous approbation of the Holy See.

Canon 463 then lays down the general rule with regard to the disposal of stole fees. It assigns them to the parish priest, but leaves details to be determined by custom or by lawful authority.

Canon 1410, quoted above, does not contradict this provision. It supposes that as a rule the dowry of a benefice will be provided from other sources; but if there are no other sources or not sufficient for the decent support of the parish priest, then this may be supplied from the stole fees which ordinarily are the perquisites of the parish priest.

## CHAPTER V

### TAKING PART IN NON-CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONS

CATHOLICS in England form a small minority of the population. In civil life they are necessarily brought into touch with non-Catholics, they make friends and acquaintances among them, and frequently they have non-Catholic relatives by blood or by marriage. It is only natural that occasions should arise when they are asked to take part in some non-Catholic religious function. They are invited to a Protestant wedding or funeral, a Catholic Mayor is asked to go to the Anglican church on Mayor's Sunday, a Protestant friend asks a Catholic to be his best man at his marriage or a witness at it, or to be sponsor for his child at baptism in the Anglican church. May a Catholic with a good conscience do any of these things?

The law of the Catholic Church on such points is stated with great clearness in Canon 1258 of the Code of Canon Law.

*Canon* 1258.

§ 1. It is not lawful for the faithful in any manner to assist actively or to take part in the religious services of non-Catholics.

§ 2. Passive or merely material presence by reason of a civil office or for the sake of showing respect can be tolerated for a good reason, to be approved by the bishop in case of doubt, at the funerals, marriages, and similar functions of non-Catholics, provided that there be no danger of perversion or scandal.

This is not a merely positive law of the Catholic Church which she has made for reasons of her own. She believes and teaches that she has been appointed by God through Jesus Christ to offer God a worship which is pleasing to him. Her worship is the only divine worship which has been established directly or indirectly by the authority of God. It is the only worship which is pleasing to him objectively. If any other worship is offered to him in good faith and with sincerity the dispositions of those who offer it will please God, but the worship itself will be displeasing to him objectively. Catholics know this. They know that non-Catholic religious worship is not of divine institution, that it has no divine approbation, that objectively it is displeasing to God. They do not condemn those who believe in it; they leave them to their own consciences, and trust that God, who sees the heart, will accept their good dispositions. But they cannot offer God non-Catholic worship themselves. If they did so, they would be guilty of a great sin in offering to God a worship which they knew to be false and unauthorized, a worship which is objectively displeasing to God.

This principle is at the root of the first section of Canon 1258: "It is not lawful for the faithful in any manner to assist actively or to take part in the religious services of non-Catholics."

This section will enable us at once to decide on the lawfulness or unlawfulness of several of the actions mentioned above. To be sponsor for a child at a non-Catholic baptism, to act as best man at a non-Catholic wedding, to act as bridesmaid at such a wedding or to be a witness at it, would be to assist actively and to take part in a non-Catholic religious service, and thus they would be violations of the divine law and of the law of the Church.

The second section tells us that passive and merely material presence at certain non-Catholic religious functions may be tolerated on certain conditions. When a man is passively present at a function he takes no active part in it; he is there merely as a spectator. When a Catholic looks on at a Protestant baptism or wedding, he does not himself join in a religious act which he recognizes as unauthorized by God and as displeasing to him. Still, his passive presence may be misunderstood. It may be looked upon as giving some sort of approbation or recognition to the claims of a false religion, or it may be a cause of scandal to others, or there may be danger of relaxing one's own religious fibre and giving in to the spirit of religious indifference. For these reasons it is better, as a general rule, to keep away altogether

from non-Catholic religious services as far as is possible. However, at times this is scarcely possible. A Catholic may be a registrar of marriages, and his office may require him to assist at a Protestant marriage in his official capacity. Or a Catholic tenant may be expected to be present at the funeral of his Protestant landlord. In these and similar cases the second section of Canon 1258 says that the passive presence of Catholics at non-Catholic religious services may be tolerated, if there be a good reason, and if there be no danger of perversion or of scandal. The duties of some special office or the need of showing respect will furnish the good reason required, and in such cases there will not be much danger of perversion or of scandal. In case of doubt whether the reason is sufficiently grave the canon requires that the bishop be consulted.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE NEW CODE AND CIVIL LAW

BENEDICT XIV briefly and clearly discusses the relations which existed between canon law and civil law in his time.* He says that canon law expressly approved some of the provisions of the civil law, as, for example, legal adoption. Other provisions, like the permission of usury and the refusal to recognize marriages contracted by minors without their parents' consent, canon law reprobated and condemned. Certain other civil laws were neither expressly approved nor condemned by canon law. Civil laws of the first class may and sometimes should be quoted by canonists. Those of the second class they should not mention. But it is, he says, very useful sometimes and praiseworthy to mention those of the third class. The first class had been canonized by the Church, it was said, and thus had become integral portions of the canon law. Laws of the third kind, which relate to merely profane matters and are in no way contrary to the sacred canons, seem to be tacitly approved by canon law, says Benedict XIV. This appears from such passages as the following:

* De synodo dioecesana, lib. ix, cc. 10-14.

"As the civil law does not disdain to imitate the sacred canons, so the statutes of the sacred canons are helped by the constitutions of princes."*

And again: "Holy Church does not reject the service of secular laws if they follow in the steps of equity and justice."† "So that," concludes the learned Pope, "if an ecclesiastical judge has to pronounce sentence on a merely temporal matter, concerning which he finds that nothing has been decided by canon law, he not only can but ought to conform himself to the civil law." This, he goes on to say, is the common opinion, expressly defended by the great classical canonists. By the civil law Benedict XIV understood the later Roman law as revised by Justinian. This is clear from the quotation which he gives from Hincmar of Rheims: "The Church approves the Roman laws promulgated by the Emperor Justinian."

This point is discussed at some length by the canonist Bouix.‡ He says that when the canon law makes no provision for any particular matter, the defect is to be supplied from the Roman law. In this way the doctors unanimously understand the alliance between the canon and the Roman law. He then quotes Engel as saying: "If there is anything doubtful and obscure in canon law (as there are very few decisions in canon law especially about contracts and

* C. i, de nov. oper. nuntiat.

† C. *Super specula*, de privil. ‡ *De judiciis*, i, pp. 19 ff.

pacts), but the matter is clear in civil law, and it is profane and not spiritual, there is room in the ecclesiastical court even for the civil law."

The above-quoted text of the canon law,* says Suarez, " does not speak of temporal but of ecclesiastical causes, and in this respect it ought to be observed in the whole Church; because in these causes it is everywhere subject to the canon law, and so it ought also to make use of the civil law in so far as it is there canonized." " That decretal, then," concludes Bouix, " according to the common interpretation of doctors, canonizes the civil law of Justinian—that is, decrees that it should be applied to the settlement of those questions only about which there is nothing determinate found in the canon law."

The same author remarks that canon law attributes this force to the Roman or Justinian law, not to the civil law which other nations have used in the past or use now. And so it would be useless to quote the civil law of other nations in proving a point in the ecclesiastical court because the Church has not made them its own, but only the Justinian law as supplementary in those matters about which the canons say nothing or speak doubtfully.

This latter opinion of the old doctors has not gone unchallenged in recent times. Cardinal d'Annibale† agreed that the Roman civil law should be consulted

* C. i, de nov. oper.

† *Summula Theologiae Moralis*, i, n. 201, ed. 3.

by the canonist for the interpretation of canons which were made when the Roman civil law was in force. But he maintained that the civil law which is in force now should be made use of to supplement the canon law in those profane matters in which nothing is laid down in the canon law.

Although this last principle is not formulated in express terms, it seems to have been virtually adopted in the new Code of Canon Law. In large departments of law the new Code expressly approves the enactments of the civil law in the country or state concerned, unless they are contrary to the divine law or to the express provisions of the new Code. It would seem, then, that in all these departments the civil law of each country or state is canonized by the new canon law. Thus with regard to contracts and payments Canon 1529 prescribes:

What the civil law in the country lays down about contracts both in general and in particular, whether nominate or innominate, and about payments, let that be observed in canon law in ecclesiastical matters with the same effects, unless it is contrary to divine law or it is provided otherwise in canon law.

There is a special provision as to the time for urging the obligation of contracts in Canon 33, § 2:

As far as regards the time of urging the obligation of contracts, unless there is an express agreement to the contrary, let what the civil law prescribes which is in force in the country, be observed.

Canon 1543 contains a pronouncement on the legal interest for a loan:

If a fungible is so given to someone that it becomes his, and afterward so much in the same kind is restored, no gain by reason of the contract can be received; but in the lending of a fungible it is not in itself unlawful to make an agreement about the legal gain, unless it is certain that it is immoderate, or even about a greater gain, if there is a just and proportionate title.

The contractual capacity of minors is apparently regulated by the civil law, according to Canon 89:

A person who has attained his majority has the full exercise of his rights; a minor remains subject to the authority of his parents or guardians in the exercise of his rights, except in those matters in which the law holds minors exempt from parental authority.

In certain circumstances the sacred furniture and relics which belonged to a dead cardinal, residential bishop, and beneficed cleric become the property of the Church according to canon law. Canon 1301 prescribes that all these are bound to provide by will, or by another instrument formally valid in civil law, that what is prescribed by the canons in this matter may obtain its effect in the civil court. In this connection Canon 1513, § 2, should be noticed. It says:

Let the formalities of the civil law be observed as far as possible in last wills for the benefit of the

Church; if they have been omitted, let the heirs be admonished to fulfil the will of the testator.

So that, although the formalities required in a will by the law of the country should be complied with, as a precautionary measure, they are not required for the validity of a will in favour of pious causes in the forum of conscience and of the Church.

According to the spirit of the Church, all possible means should be taken to avoid lawsuits among the faithful. The Code bids the judge be on the lookout both before a trial begins and while it is going on for an opportunity to induce the parties to compose their differences without the form of a contentious trial. One way of doing this is by what the law calls a transaction, or settlement out of court. Canon 1926 provides as follows:

In a transaction let the rules be observed which are laid down by the civil laws of the place in which the transaction is entered upon, unless they are against divine or ecclesiastical law, and with certain reservations which are laid down in the canons.

Another means of attaining the same end is by a compromise for arbiters or arbitrators. Canon 1929 is as follows:

To avoid judicial trials the parties can also enter into an agreement by which the controversy is committed to the judgement of one or more who will

settle the question according to law, or treat and transact the business equitably; the former are properly called *arbiters*, the latter *arbitrators*.

What is laid down concerning a transaction is, says the Code, applicable to a compromise, and so the rules laid down by the civil law of the country about a compromise are also canonized by the Church.

The Church canonized the Roman civil law of adoption, and canonists and moral theologians commonly taught that in countries where the modern civil law agrees in essentials on this point with the Roman law it also was canonized by the Church. In such countries legal adoption was a diriment impediment of marriage between certain parties. In other countries where legal adoption was not recognized or where it differed essentially from the Roman law, there was no diriment impediment of legal relationship.

The new Code canonizes the law of the country on this point without reference to the Roman law. Thus Canon 1059 provides:

In those countries where by the civil law legal relationship arising from adoption makes marriage unlawful, marriage is also unlawful by canon law.

And Canon 1080:

Those who by civil law are held to be incapable of marrying one another, on account of legal relationship

arising from adoption, cannot contract a valid marriage with one another by force of the canon law.

Prescription was regarded as a legitimate means of acquiring property and rights and of freeing oneself from various burdens on certain conditions. In general the conditions required were those laid down by the Roman civil law, but they were corrected and amplified by the Church. The new Code has made a great change in this matter. It canonizes the provisions of the civil law of each particular country with certain reservations. Canon 1508 is as follows:

As a means of acquisition and freeing oneself from burdens the Church receives for ecclesiastical goods prescription as it exists in the civil legislation of each respective nation, but safeguarding what is prescribed in the canons which follow.

The following are not subject to prescription:

1. What is of divine law, whether natural or positive.

2. What can be obtained by apostolic privilege alone.

3. Spiritual rights of which laymen are not capable, if there is question of prescription for the benefit of laymen.

4. The certain and indubitable limits of ecclesiastical provinces, dioceses, parishes, vicariates apostolic, prefectures apostolic, abbacies, or prelacies of no diocese.

5. Mass stipends and obligations.

6. An ecclesiastical benefice without title.

7. The right of visitation and obedience, so that subjects can be visited by no prelate and are now subject to no prelate.

8. Payment of the cathedraticum.

Sacred things which are in the ownership of private persons can be acquired by private persons by prescription, but they cannot apply them to profane uses; however, if they have lost their consecration or blessing, they can be acquired freely even for profane uses, but not for sordid uses.

Sacred things which are not in the ownership of private persons can be prescribed, not by a private person, but by an ecclesiastical moral person against another ecclesiastical moral person.

Immovables, precious movables, rights and actions, whether personal or real, which belong to the Apostolic See, are prescribed in the space of one hundred years.

Those which belong to another ecclesiastical moral person are prescribed in thirty years.

No prescription is valid unless it rests on good faith, not only when possession begins, but during the whole time of possession required for prescription.

The following practical case may perhaps help us to realize the effect of these provisions of the new Code of Canon Law:

Peter, the parish priest of A, borrowed a valuable book from John, the parish priest of B. Shortly

afterward John died and Peter was removed to another parish in a distant part of the diocese. Peter told James, his successor in the parish of A, that the books which he would find in the presbytery were parish property, quite forgetting the valuable book borrowed from John. James supposed that this book belonged to his parish like the others and kept it for thirty years. Does it now belong to parish A by prescription?

It does belong to parish A, I think, if it formerly belonged to parish B. But supposing that it was John's personal property. The Code sends us to the law of the country, and I will suppose that, as in English law, the law of the country grants no title to movables by prescription. To whom will John's valuable book belong? Can it be prescribed, and how long must possession last before the prescription is complete?

## CHAPTER VII

### BAPTISM

WE are born into this world deprived of the grace of God, and, being deprived of the grace of God, we have no right to enter into the Kingdom of God. If we wish to enter into the Kingdom of God we must be born again of water and the Holy Ghost. So Jesus Christ willed, and only through him and by submitting to the conditions which he laid down can we hope to be saved. We are born again, are regenerated, receive a new spiritual life of grace by receiving Christian baptism. Well aware of its importance and necessity for salvation, the Church has made many laws and regulations for the due reception of Christian baptism, and I propose to put down here the chief of those which concern the Catholic laity.

Canon 770 bids parish priests and preachers frequently to remind the faithful of their grave obligation to have newly born children baptized as soon as possible. If a newly born child is in danger of death it should be baptized at once, and if a priest cannot easily be had anyone may baptize in that case. If there is no danger of death and no reason for delay

baptism should be administered within a week or two, and theologians commonly teach that it would be a grievous sin to delay it beyond a month after birth.

The Ritual bids the parish priest take care that the name given to the child in baptism is that of a saint whose example and patronage may assist it through life.

One, or at most two, godparents are prescribed for solemn baptism. If there are two they must be of different sexes. Especially when parents are in default, the godparents should consider that the spiritual welfare of their godchild is entrusted to them, and they should do what they can to ensure that their godchild so lives as they promised that he would do in baptism. Certain conditions are laid down in Canon 765 which must be fulfilled by those who act as godparents in baptism:

1. A godparent must be baptized, he must have attained the use of reason, and he must have the intention of fulfilling the office or of being godparent.

2. He must not belong to any heretical or schismatical sect, nor be under condemnatory or declaratory sentence of excommunication, nor be infamous with infamy of law, nor excluded from acting in ecclesiastical courts, nor a deposed or degraded cleric.

3. He may not be the father or mother or spouse of the person to be baptized.

4. He must be appointed by the person to be baptized, or by his parents or guardians, or in default of these by the minister of baptism.

5. In person or by proxy in the act of baptism he must physically hold or touch the person to be baptized, or he must immediately raise or receive him from the sacred font or from the hands of the minister of baptism.

By Canon 766 certain other conditions are necessary so that one may lawfully be admitted as godparent:

1. He must have attained his fourteenth year of age unless for some good reason the minister judge otherwise.

2. On account of some notorious crime he must not be excommunicated nor excluded from acting in the ecclesiastical courts, nor infamous with the infamy of law though no sentence may have been passed on him, nor interdicted, nor otherwise publicly criminal, nor infamous with infamy of fact.

3. He must know the rudiments of the faith.

4. He must not be a novice or professed in any religious body unless there is urgent necessity and the express leave be had of at least the local Superior.

5. He must not be in sacred orders unless the express leave be had of his own Ordinary.

Baptism is a parochial Sacrament, and a child should be taken for baptism to the parish church of the district where the parents have a domicile or

quasi-domicile to be baptized by the parish priest or by his delegate. Even if a child is born outside the parish to which its parents belong, it should be taken for baptism to the parish church of the parents and be baptized by their parish priest if that can be done easily and without delay; otherwise any parish priest in his own parish may baptize a child out of the parish of its parents. As anyone may baptize in case of necessity, all the faithful, but especially doctors and nurses, should know how to administer private baptism. In such a case two witnesses, or at least one, should be present who will be able to prove the baptism. A child baptized privately in danger of death, if it subsequently recovers, should be taken to the church to have the ceremonies supplied by the priest, who should, of course, be informed that the child was previously baptized privately. According to Canon 768, only the minister of baptism and the godparents contract spiritual relationship with the person baptized, so that spiritual relationship between the parents of the person baptized and the godparents and minister of baptism is now abolished.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONFIRMATION

THE Sacrament of Confirmation has a close connection with that of Baptism. The Sacrament of Baptism gives spiritual life to the soul. Confirmation makes that spiritual life grow, increase, and become strong. Baptism makes us followers of Christ: Confirmation makes us his soldiers. Baptism cleanses the soul from sin by infusing into it the grace of God, and so Confirmation supposes that the soul is already in the state of grace and free from mortal sin. It is a Sacrament of the living, and it would be a great sin to receive it knowingly in a state of grievous sin. As Confirmation presupposes that the soul is in the state of grace, and all who die in a state of grace are saved, Confirmation is not a necessary means of salvation. All devout Catholics would, of course, make use of so powerful a means of obtaining spiritual strength, but many theologians used to maintain that there was no obligation under pain of sin to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. This opinion can no longer be maintained. Canon 787 of the new Code of Canon Law expressly declares:

Although this Sacrament is not a necessary means of salvation, yet it is not lawful for anyone to neglect to receive it when an occasion is offered; and let parish priests take care that the faithful approach to receive it at the suitable time.

Canon 1021, § 2, prescribes that those Catholics who wish to marry and who have not been confirmed should be confirmed before being admitted to matrimony if it can be done without serious inconvenience. Canon 974 lays down that Confirmation is a necessary condition for the lawful reception of Orders.

Although in the Latin Church the administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation is conveniently deferred until the person to be confirmed is about seven years of age, yet it may be administered before that age if a child be in danger of death or if for good and grave reasons it seems proper to the minister of the Sacrament (Can. 788). Those who are to be confirmed must be present in the church at the first general imposition of the hands of the minister of the Sacrament, and they must not leave it till the ministration is finished.

From very early times sponsors have been required for Confirmation as well as for Baptism. One sponsor should only present one or two persons to be confirmed, and each person to be confirmed should only have one sponsor. While the bishop is confirming a person the sponsor stands behind the

candidate for Confirmation and places his right hand on the right shoulder of the person confirmed. Certain conditions must be fulfilled in order that one may validly act as sponsor:

1. He himself must be confirmed, he must have attained the use of reason, and he must have the intention of being sponsor.

2. He must not belong to any heretical or schismatical body, nor by declaratory or condemnatory sentence be excommunicated, or infamous with the infamy of law, or excluded from acting in the ecclesiastical courts, nor a deposed or degraded cleric.

3. He may not be the father, mother, or spouse of the person to be confirmed.

4. He must be designated by the person to be confirmed, or by his parents or guardians, or in default of these, or if they refuse, by the minister of the Sacrament or by the parish priest.

5. He must physically touch the person confirmed in the act of being confirmed in person or by proxy.

In order that a person may be lawfully admitted as sponsor certain other conditions must be fulfilled:

1. He must be different from the sponsor of Baptism, unless in the judgement of the minister there be a reasonable cause for departing from this rule, or unless Confirmation be lawfully administered immediately after Baptism.

2. He must be of the same sex as the person con-

firmed, unless the minister judge otherwise for a reasonable cause in particular cases.

Moreover, what is prescribed by Canon 766 for Baptism must be observed also for Confirmation—namely:

(*a*) He must have attained his fourteenth year of age, unless for some good reason the minister judge otherwise.

(*b*) On account of some notorious crime he must not be excommunicated, nor excluded from acting in the ecclesiastical courts, nor infamous with the infamy of law though no sentence may have been passed on him, nor interdicted, nor otherwise publicly criminal, nor infamous with infamy of fact.

(*c*) He must know the rudiments of the faith.

(*d*) He must not be a novice or professed in any religious body, unless there is urgent necessity and the express leave be had of at least the local Superior.

(*e*) He must not be in sacred orders unless the express leave be had of his own Ordinary. From Confirmation spiritual relationship arises between the person confirmed and his sponsor, and hence the sponsor is bound to consider the godchild as specially commended to him and to procure his Christian education. However, this spiritual relationship which arises from Confirmation is no longer a diriment impediment of marriage.

## CHAPTER IX

### HOLY COMMUNION

THE Fathers of the Church distinguished three ways in which Holy Communion may be received by the faithful. He who is conscious of being in mortal sin receives it merely sacramentally; he who with a pure conscience, with faith and with love, desires to approach Holy Communion receives it spiritually; he who actually communicates with the proper dispositions receives it both sacramentally and spiritually.

The Church forbids children of tender years who have no knowledge or desire of Holy Communion to be admitted to this Sacrament. But when children are in danger of death, if they can distinguish the blessed Sacrament from ordinary bread and adore it, they may and should be admitted to Holy Communion.

When children are in no danger of death a fuller knowledge and more careful preparation are required in them before they are admitted to Holy Communion. They should, as far as their age permits, know and believe in the existence of God, that he rewards

men according to their deserts, that he is one in three Persons, and that the second Person became man for our redemption. They should also approach Holy Communion with proper devotion.

A child's confessor, or parents, or those who are in the place of parents, are the proper judges as to whether his dispositions are sufficient for first Communion.

But it is the duty of the parish priest to be on the lookout and to assure himself by examination if he judge it to be prudent, so as to prevent children from approaching Holy Communion before they have attained the use of reason or without the required dispositions; and also to take care that those who have attained the use of reason and are sufficiently disposed are refreshed with this divine food as soon as may be.

Those who are publicly unworthy are to be kept away from Holy Communion. Such are excommunicated, interdicted, and manifestly infamous persons, unless it is certain that they have repented and amended their lives, and beforehand have made reparation for the public scandal which they have given. But the minister of the Sacrament is bidden to repel secret sinners if they ask secretly for Holy Communion and he knows that they have not amended their lives (unless, of course, he knows their sins only from confession); he should not, however,

repel them if they ask publicly and he cannot pass them by without scandal.

Let no one whose conscience is burdened with mortal sin, however contrite he may deem himself to be, approach Holy Communion without previous sacramental confession; but if there is urgent necessity for communicating, and he cannot obtain a confessor, let him first make an act of perfect contrition and then he may go to Holy Communion. In general it is not lawful to receive Holy Communion more than once in the day. But if one is placed in danger of death or it is necessary to consume the sacred Species to preserve them from irreverence, one may receive the blessed Sacrament although it was received earlier in the day.

Except in the same cases, no one may be admitted to Holy Communion who has not kept the natural fast from the previous midnight. However, sick persons whose sickness has kept them in the house for a month and there is no sure hope of a speedy recovery, with the prudent advice of their confessor, may receive Holy Communion once or twice in the week even though they may have taken some medicine or something liquid before Holy Communion.

All the faithful of both sexes after they have come to years of discretion—that is, to the use of reason—ought to receive the blessed Eucharist once a year at least, at Easter time, unless, with the advice of his own priest, for some reasonable cause anyone judge

that he ought to abstain from receiving it for a time. Each of the faithful should be advised to satisfy the precept of Easter Communion in his own parish, and those who fulfil it in another parish should take care to inform their own parish priest that they have fulfilled it. The precept of Easter Communion is still obligatory when it was not fulfilled at the prescribed time for any reason whatever. The precept of receiving Holy Communion is not fulfilled by a sacrilegious Communion.

The obligation of receiving Holy Communion which binds those who have not reached the age of puberty (fourteen in boys, twelve in girls) falls also and principally on those who ought to have charge of them—that is, on parents, guardians, confessors, teachers, and parish priests. In danger of death, from whatever cause it proceeds, the faithful are bound to receive Holy Communion. Even if they have received Holy Communion on the same day it is much to be recommended that they should receive it again when they are brought into danger of death. While the danger of death lasts it is both lawful and becoming that, according to the prudent advice of their confessor, they receive it several times on different days.

Holy Viaticum for the sick should not be deferred too long, and it should be administered while the sick have full possession of their faculties.

The faithful of whatever rite, to satisfy their piety,

may receive Holy Communion consecrated according to any rite, but they are to be advised to make their Easter Communion according to their own rite. The dying should receive Holy Viaticum according to their own rite, but if there is urgent necessity they may receive it in any rite.

## CHAPTER X

### FREQUENT COMMUNION

*" I am the bread of life "* (*John vi* 48).

1. IN these words, manifestly, our Lord does not speak of the temporal life of man here on earth. He goes on to say that one who eats of this bread will not die, but that he shall live for ever. He is clearly speaking then of life everlasting, of the supernatural life of the soul which is given to man by God's grace. It is of this life that on another occasion our Lord said that he had come " that they may have life and may have it more abundantly " (John x 10). One of the reasons why he came on earth was that he might merit for us his grace and communicate it to us for the forgiveness of sin and for the attainment of life everlasting. The chief means by which he communicates his grace to us and thereby gives and preserves the spiritual life of our souls are the sacraments. We receive that life in Baptism, the Sacrament of regeneration, of a new birth, whereby we become sons of God—" who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God " (John i 13). We then obtain the right to

call God "our Father," and, as God's children, we obtain a right to our Father's inheritance, to enter our Father's house, and to make it our home with the rest of God's family for evermore. There will, too, be a family likeness between God and his children. "We shall be like to him because we shall see him as he is"; we shall by grace even be "partakers of the divine nature."

All kinds of life, vegetative, sentient, and intellectual, require food. By taking in food living things preserve their life, grow stronger until they come to maturity, and then decay and die. The spiritual life of grace requires food like the lower forms of life. By taking in food it increases and becomes stronger. There is an important difference between the life of grace and the lower forms of life. The life of grace does not attain to full maturity while on earth; but when death comes it leaps forth "springing up into life everlasting."

2. In other respects the life of divine grace is like other forms of life and needs food. As it is divine, even a participation of the divine nature, its food must also be divine. Our Lord has provided for this by instituting the blessed Eucharist, in which he himself comes to the baptized Christian, unites himself to his soul, strengthens it and nourishes it with abundant graces, as earthly food strengthens and nourishes the body. For this reason he chose the accidents of bread and wine and made them the

outward sign of the inward grace which is given in this the greatest of all sacraments.

Living things normally take food every day. According to the intention of our Lord in this point, too, the life of grace was to resemble the lower forms of life. This we gather from the practice of the first Christians at Jerusalem, who, we read, "were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles and in the communication of the breaking of bread and in prayers" (Acts ii 42). In the prayer, too, which he composed for the use of his followers, our Lord teaches us to ask for daily Communion in the words: "Give us this day our daily bread." Without doubt food for the body is also comprehended in this petition, but the Fathers of the Church all but unanimously interpret it as referring principally to Holy Communion. It is not necessary to dwell long on the causes which led to a general falling away from the early practice of the Church in this matter. The faith of many grew weak and the charity of many more waxed cold, until at last the Church was forced to make a general law which obliged all the faithful who had come to years of discretion to receive Holy Communion at least once a year and that at Easter or thereabouts. Together with loose practice in the reception of Holy Communion false views as to the reason of its institution by our Lord were widely prevalent. Many taught that Holy Communion was a reward for virtue, and they vied with one another

in laying down rigorous conditions to be fulfilled before anyone could be admitted to Holy Communion oftener than once a year. Days spent in special preparation were considered necessary for its worthy reception. The Church endeavoured to keep before the minds of the faithful the true reason why Christ our Lord instituted the blessed Sacrament. It was that the faithful might derive from it strength to overcome their sensual passions, a means of cleansing themselves from the stains of daily faults, and of avoiding those more grievous falls to which poor human nature is liable unless it is preserved from them by special help from God. Controversy was especially rife about the dispositions of soul which were considered necessary for the frequent reception of Holy Communion. Few were considered fit to receive Holy Communion daily. All these doubts and controversies were settled by the Decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Council issued by the order of Pope Pius X on December 20, 1905. It is the duty of the clergy frequently to explain to their flocks the chief practical provisions of this decree. First of all, it lays down the general proposition that frequent and daily Communion, as a thing most earnestly desired by Christ our Lord and by the Catholic Church, should be open to all the faithful, of whatever rank and condition of life; so that no one who is in a state of grace, and who approaches this holy table with a right and devout intention, can be lawfully

hindered therefrom. So that there are two principal conditions to be fulfilled by one who wishes to receive Holy Communion daily. The first condition is that he be not conscious of mortal sin. In was of this condition that St Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread." If he is conscious that he has committed mortal sin since his last confession he must obtain forgiveness of it by receiving valid absolution in the Sacrament of Penance. If he receive Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin, "he eateth and drinketh judgement to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord." It is indeed desirable that one who wishes to go frequently to Holy Communion should as far as possible be free from deliberate venial sin, but still this is not a necessary condition for frequent and daily Communion; it is sufficient if he be free from mortal sin.

The second condition is that he must have a right intention. According to the decree this right intention consists in this: that he who approaches the holy table should do so not out of routine or vainglory or human respect, but for the purpose of pleasing God, of being more closely united with him by charity, and of seeking this divine remedy for his weakness and defects. In other words, he must be influenced by a spiritual and supernatural motive for wishing to go frequently to Communion, not by a merely natural motive.

Moreover, the confessor's advice should be asked so that the practice of frequent Communion may be accompanied with greater safety and more abundant fruit.

3. No one who realizes that in Holy Communion he receives Jesus Christ himself would dream of approaching this Sacrament without due preparation or without making a suitable thanksgiving after receiving it. Reverence for our Lord demands that. It would be a great spiritual misfortune if anyone allowed familiarity with Holy Communion to make him negligent either in his preparation or thanksgiving. Better go to Holy Communion less frequently and with due preparation than frequently without the proper preparation. Moreover, the sacraments give greater grace to those who are better disposed to receive them. Just as dry wood catches fire immediately when a match is applied to it, while it is very difficult to get wet wood to burn, so the soul that is well disposed for the reception of Holy Communion quickly catches the fire of divine charity, while the soul that is unprepared remains cold and listless.

This duty of making a suitable preparation and thanksgiving in receiving Holy Communion is insisted on in the decree on frequent Communion already alluded to. "Care is to be taken," it says, "that Holy Communion be preceded by serious preparation, and followed by a suitable thanksgiving,

according to each one's strength, circumstances, and duties." If this is done as right feeling and the wish of the Church require, the practice of frequent and daily Communion will be found to bring with it all those graces and helps of which our Lord intended it to be the vehicle. It will cleanse us from venial sins, cool the ardour of passion, and make it comparatively easy to keep God's commandments and avoid grievous sin.

If we have not the opportunity of frequently receiving Holy Communion, or if our duties prevent us from availing ourselves of the opportunity, we can to some extent compensate for this by making a devout spiritual Communion. A spiritual Communion consists in putting ourselves in the proper dispositions for receiving Holy Communion sacramentally as far as possible, and eliciting an ardent desire to receive our Lord. He is anxious to come to us and he seconds such desires by granting abundant graces and blessings in answer to them.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE MASS PRO POPULO

BY his ordination to the priesthood a priest is set apart by the Church to offer sacrifice to God on behalf of her children. The priest is a public official deputed by the Church to offer public worship in her name to the Creator and Lord of all things. This is the teaching of St Paul. "Every high priest," says the Apostle, "taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins." Whenever a priest says Mass, all the faithful receive some spiritual benefit from it, a share in the general fruit of the Mass, as theologians term it. By saying Mass worthily the priest also acquires great merit for himself: he does a good deed which is most acceptable to God. This is the very special fruit of Mass, as theologians term it. But besides the general and the very special fruit there is also a mean fruit which is inherent in every sacrifice. A sacrifice is generally offered for some particular person or some particular intention. It is a peace offering, or a sin offering, or an offering of thanks-

giving, or a petition for some special favour. The intention of the priest directs the sacrifice to one of these ends, while no special intention is required in order to apply the general or the very special fruit of the Mass. The Council of Trent teaches that "all who have the cure of souls are commanded by divine law to know their flock and to offer sacrifice for them."* In other words, those who have the cure of souls are obliged by divine law to apply the mean fruit of the sacrifice of the Mass for the benefit of their flock. Diocesan bishops have the full cure of souls; they have jurisdiction in the external and in the internal forum; they can administer all the sacraments; it is their special duty to preach the word of God. In short, all the ordinary means which the Church possesses for the sanctification and salvation of souls are entrusted to the bishops. To them the words of the Council of Trent are in the fullest sense applicable. Bishops of dioceses are bound by divine law to apply Mass for the benefit of the flocks entrusted to them. Parish priests are of ecclesiastical not of divine institution. They have not the full cure of souls. They have only that authority, they exercise only those functions which the Church assigns them. The Church has given parish priests the cure of souls in the internal forum, and she has declared that they are bound to apply Mass for the benefit of their people. In this way they come

* Sess. 23, c. 1, de Reformatione.

hypothetically under the divine law which commands all who have the cure of souls to offer sacrifice for their flocks.

After the Council of Trent theologians began to discuss the question as to how often parish priests are bound to say Mass for the people entrusted to them. St Alphonsus tells us that before Benedict XIV settled the question by his encyclical *Cum semper*, August 19, 1744, theologians held different opinions on the subject.* Some maintained that those parish priests who had large revenues were bound to say Mass for their people every day, while those who were poor were bound to do so on feast-days. Others held that no doubt parish priests were bound to say Mass for their people sometimes in the course of the year by divine law and that this could be inferred from the Council of Trent, but that the number of times must be left to the judgement of prudent men. Others held that by virtue of their parochial charge parish priests were not bound to apply the mean fruit of the Mass for the benefit of their flocks. They satisfied their obligation by the application of the general fruit of the Mass to the needs of their people and especially to the needs of those who were present at the Mass, and they interpreted the Council of Trent in this sense. Hence they inferred that a parish priest might accept a stipend for the application of the mean fruit of such Masses. However, in spite

* *Theologia Moralis*, vi, n. 324.

of opinions and customs to the contrary, Benedict XIV decided that all who have the cure of souls are bound to say Mass and apply it to the needs of their people on all Sundays and holidays of obligation. In the time of Benedict XIV the faithful in some countries were allowed to work on certain holidays of obligation after hearing Mass. The holy Pontiff decided that on these days also parish priests were bound to say Mass for their people. He thus foreshadowed the rule about suppressed feasts. Since the time of Benedict XIV the greater number of the feasts of obligation which were then kept have been suppressed. The rule, however, laid down by Benedict XIV has constantly been adhered to by ecclesiastical authority. For more than a century now the rule on the subject has been that which is laid down in Canons 466 and 339 of the new Code of Canon Law. Bishops and parish priests alike are bound to offer Mass for the people entrusted to their charge on all Sundays and holidays of obligation, even on those that have been suppressed.

According to the Decretals of Gregory IX (1235), there were eighty-five days in the year on which the faithful were bound to hear Mass and rest from servile work. Urban VIII, by his Bull *Universa*, September 13, 1642, began the work of reduction and suppression of feasts. Other Popes, and especially Pius VI, Pius IX, and Pius X, have followed his example. Hence it is not surprising that after the

new Code was published a question was sent up to the Pontifical Commission for the authentic interpretation of the Code, asking which were the suppressed feasts on which, according to Canons 339 and 466, bishops and parish priests had to say Mass for their people. On February 17, 1918, the Pontifical Commission answered that in this matter the Code had made no change in the law hitherto in force.* After this answer certain bishops petitioned the Sacred Congregation of the Council that, for the information of those concerned, a list of feasts suppressed in the whole Church about which there is question should be authoritatively published anew. The Sacred Congregation published the list asked for in the February number of the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 1920, according to the Constitution of Urban VIII, September 13, 1642. Pius IX, in his Encyclical *Amantissimi Redemptoris*, May 3, 1858, had already declared that we must go back to the Constitution of Urban VIII in order to know which were the suppressed feasts on which Mass has to be said for the people by bishops and parish priests. His words are:

Declaramus, statuimus atque decernimus, parochos, aliosque omnes animarum curam actu gerentes sacrosanctum Missae sacrificium pro populo sibi commisso celebrare, et applicare debere tum omnibus Dominicis, aliisque diebus, qui ex praecepto adhuc

* *A. A. S.*, 1918, p. 170.

servantur, tum illis etiam, qui ex hujus Apostolicae Sedis indulgentia ex dierum de praecepto festorum numero sublati, ac translati sunt, quemadmodum ipsi animarum curatores debebant, dum memorata Urbani VIII Constitutio in pleno suo robore vigebat antequam festivi de praecepto dies imminuerentur et transferrentur.

Lehmkuhl and other writers, then, were perfectly correct when they said that the list of feasts to be observed which was drawn up by Urban VIII still furnishes the norm for deciding on what days bishops and priests are bound to say Mass for their people. The list of suppressed feasts, as published in the February number of the *Acta* of 1920, is as follows:

Feriae II et III post Dominicam Resurrectionis D. N. J. C. et Pentecostes; dies Inventionis S Crucis; dies Purificationis B. Mariae Virginis; dies Annuntiationis B. Mariae Virginis; dies Nativitatis B. Mariae Virginis; dies Dedicationis S Michaelis Archangeli; dies Nativitatis S Joannis Baptistae; dies SS Apostolorum: Andreae, Jacobi, Joannis, Thomae, Philippi et Jacobi, Bartholomaei, Matthaei, Simonis et Judae, Matthiae; dies S Stephani Protomartyris; dies SS Innocentium; dies S Laurentii Martyris; dies S Silvestri Papae; dies S Annae, matris B.M.V.; dies S Patroni Regni; dies S Patroni loci.

If in any part of the Church any of the ten feasts, which according to Canon 1247 are of obligation

throughout the whole Church, are in fact not observed as days of obligation, nevertheless bishops and priests will be under the obligation of saying Mass on those days for their people. Besides the days hitherto mentioned it has long been the custom in England to keep the feasts of St Gregory the Great, St Augustine, Apostle of England, and St Thomas of Canterbury as days of devotion, and they have been reckoned as suppressed feasts on which Mass must be said for the people. This custom was sanctioned by a decree of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide dated March 14, 1847. This decree seemed to imply that not only bishops but the missionary priests who at that time exercised the cure of souls in place of parish priests in England were obliged to say Mass for their people. This was corrected by another decree of the same Congregation dated December 3, 1866. In the latter decree it is clearly stated that neither missionary rectors nor simple missionaries are bound to apply Mass for their flocks, though it becomes them in charity to do so. It is an interesting question whether parish priests who have now been canonically instituted in England are bound to say Mass for their people on the feasts of St Gregory, St Augustine, and St Thomas of Canterbury.

They certainly are not bound to do so by the common law of the Church, nor by custom, as they have not been in existence for the time required to form a custom. They are no longer under the

authority of Propaganda, and cannot now be subject to a decree issued more than seventy years ago. I will not venture to discuss the question whether the English bishops are obliged to offer Mass for their people on the feasts of St Gregory, St Augustine, and St Thomas of Canterbury. Their lordships will be able to decide the question for themselves.

I think, however, that the following consideration should have due weight in deciding the question. In the rescript of Propaganda, December 3, 1866, which decided that missionary priests in England were not bound to say Mass for their people on Sundays and holidays of obligation, Cardinal Barnabo answers some objections which had been raised against this decision. Some said that the former rescript of Propaganda dated March 14, 1847, of itself imposed the obligation. Cardinal Barnabo answered that the rescript was obviously no new law. It was merely an answer to the petition of the English Vicars Apostolic. It answered their question *juxta exposita*, on the hypothesis that the Vicars Apostolic alleged what was a fact. If their allegation was false, then the answer of Propaganda had no juridical value. He in like manner disposes of the contention that the obligation to say Mass rested on custom. He answers curtly that it is a well-known axiom of law that a custom founded on mistake has no force. I may point out that these principles of law go further than merely to solve the question to which

they are applied by Cardinal Barnabo. He applied them to the question whether missionary priests in England were bound to say Mass for their people. But they may also be applied to another point in the petition of the Vicars Apostolic to which an answer was given by Propaganda in the rescript of March 14, 1847. The Vicars Apostolic seem to have been under the impression that the term "suppressed feasts," used in this connection, referred not only to the feasts which Urban VIII had declared to be feasts of obligation, though they had been subsequently suppressed, but also to feasts which were kept in England alone before the sixteenth century. This, as we have seen, is a mistake. It would seem, then, that when the rescript of March 14, 1847, says that "His Holiness declares that the obligation of applying Mass should be fulfilled on the feasts of St Gregory, St Augustine, and St Thomas of Canterbury," it is not his intention to impose a new law: he merely answers *juxta exposita*. If in England there is an Apostolic indult or some special concession to that effect, then it will be sufficient to apply Mass on those feasts without troubling about the rest. If, then, we apply the argument of Cardinal Barnabo to the question whether the English bishops are bound to say Mass for their flocks on the feasts of St Gregory, St Augustine, and St Thomas of Canterbury, according to the rescript of Propaganda, March 14, 1847, our conclusion may be as follows: That decree rests on a

false hypothesis and therefore has no binding force. If custom is alleged to the contrary, then we may say that inasmuch as the custom rests on a mistake, it too is destitute of legal force.

St George is patron of the kingdom, and so bishops and parish priests should apply Mass for their people on his feast day (S.C. de P.F., May 24, 1863).

In discussing this question I have confined myself to the endeavour to decide whether in England there is an obligation for pastors of souls to apply Mass for their flocks on the Feasts of St Gregory, St Augustine, and St Thomas of Canterbury as well as on the days prescribed by the common law of the Church. Pastors of souls may, of course, apply Mass for their flocks on those days or on any other day if they choose to do so. If they choose to do more for their flocks than is prescribed by canon law, no one will have anything but praise for their zeal and charity. This consideration will explain the tone of a letter issued by the venerated Bishop Grant to the clergy of Southwark on May 1, 1867. In that letter the bishop did not confine himself to a question of strict obligation, he gave expression to his view of what a zealous pastor should do for his flock. He quotes the rescript or the indult of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda dated December 3, 1866. The second question answered in that rescript was: *An stante recentiore expositione quoad festos dies sublatos in Constitituone Amantissimi Redemptoris, permitti possit*

*ut Episcopi servent dies indicatos in rescripto* 14 *Martii*, 1847? To this question Bishop Grant says: "The Sacred Congregation answered in the affirmative; that is, that the rescript of March 14, 1847, is to be followed as to the days on which the bishops are bound to apply their Mass *pro populo*." It is obvious that if we take Bishop Grant's words quite literally, they go further than the words of the rescript warrant. The words of the rescript are *permitti possit* (it can be allowed; they may do it if they like). The bishop interprets this as equivalent to *they are bound*, which is not quite correct. The words of the rescript do not warrant the assertion that pastors in England are bound to apply Mass for their flocks on the Feasts of St Gregory, St Augustine, and St Thomas.

## CHAPTER XII

### FORGIVENESS OF SIN

ON the evening of the day of his Resurrection our Lord appeared to his Apostles gathered together in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, and after he had convinced them of the reality of his Resurrection he said: "Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." He then breathed upon them, and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." His Father sent him to save his people from their sins, to die for the remission of sins, to reconcile sinners with God. After his Resurrection he used his divine authority to send his Apostles into the world with the same object in view. He made them his ambassadors, his vicars, his ministers to forgive sin and reconcile sinners with God in his name, by his authority. They received power to forgive or not to forgive, not arbitrarily, but with discrimination. They were to be faithful ministers and stewards of the power entrusted to them. They were to forgive such as were worthy of forgiveness, and not

to forgive those who were unworthy. To know who had committed sin and who desired forgiveness and was worthy of it the Apostles could only learn from the confession of the guilty. And so, as the Council of Trent teaches, we have in the words quoted above the institution of the Sacrament of Penance and the practice of Confession as it exists in the Catholic Church. What concerns the penitent in this Sacrament is summed up very briefly in a few canons of the new Code of Canon Law.

According to Canon 901, he who after baptism has committed mortal sins which have not yet been confessed and absolved in the Sacrament of Penance ought to confess all the mortal sins of which he is conscious after a diligent examination of conscience, and mention in confession the circumstances which change the species of a sin. Thus, if sin be committed with a married woman the circumstance of marriage must be mentioned, for it changes the species of the sin and makes it adultery, not simple fornication. Mortal sins committed after baptism and circumstances which make them mortal sins of a different kind are the necessary matter of confession. Venial sins and mortal sins which have already been confessed are sufficient matter for confession. They may be confessed, but there is no obligation to confess them. Venial sins can be forgiven in many other ways besides the Sacrament of Penance. Of course, if one wants absolution and the grace of the

Sacrament he must furnish some matter for absolution. If he has committed no mortal sins since his last confession he must confess some venial sin or some sins of his past life.

According to Canon 905, any of the faithful is at liberty to make his confession to any priest who has faculties in the place where the confession is made, even though the priest belongs to a rite different from that of the penitent.

Canon 906 prescribes that all the faithful who have committed mortal sin and have necessary matter for confession after they have come to the use of reason are bound to go to Confession at least once a year. They are also bound to go to Confession when they are in mortal sin and are in danger of death. This obligation is not satisfied by making a sacrilegious confession or a confession which is voluntarily null and void. It must be such as to reconcile the sinner with God; what is required is repentance.

From what has been said it follows that there is no absolute obligation to go to Confession binding on one who is not conscious of being in mortal sin. However, as the Catechism teaches, forgiveness of mortal sin is not the only reason for going to Confession. The Sacrament of Penance, besides forgiving sin, also increases the grace of God in the soul, and the question arises how often good Catholics who have no mortal sins to confess should go to Confession. The new Code of Canon Law will

enable us to lay down a general rule on this practical point. Canon 595 bids Superiors of Religious Orders take care that all religious under their authority go to Confession at least once a week. Canon 1367 enjoins on bishops the duty of seeing that the seminarians who are being trained for the priesthood in their diocesan seminaries go to Confession at least once a week.

Canon 931 grants a special privilege to those of the faithful who are accustomed to go to Confession twice in the month unless they are prevented by some good reason. By going to Confession twice a month they can gain all indulgences without actual confession, even though confession is one of the conditions for gaining them, but this concession does not extend to jubilees or to indulgences granted in the same way as jubilees. These canons seem to show what the mind of the Church is with regard to the use of the Sacrament of Penance by those who aspire to lead devout lives. We may perhaps lay down the general rule in the following terms: Good and devout Catholics, especially if they go frequently to Holy Communion, should make a practice of going to Confession once a week, or at least once a fortnight.

## CHAPTER XIII

### APOSTOLIC INDULGENCES

THERE is an old custom for Catholics staying in Rome to leave objects of piety, such as medals, crucifixes, crosses, rosaries, on a certain window-sill in the Vatican, so that they may be blessed and indulgenced by the Pope when he next passes by that way. If they are fortunate enough to obtain an audience of the Pope they can take their objects of piety with them to the audience, and the Pope blesses and indulgences them there. One of the first things that a newly elected Pope does is to issue a new edition of the list of indulgences which he intends to grant to such objects of piety as he blesses. Nowadays it is quite common for priests to receive from the Holy See special faculties to bless objects of piety and annex the apostolic indulgences to them. Such priests must, of course, conform to the instructions laid down by the Pope with reference to these indulgences. Pius XI was elected Pope on February 6, 1922, and on February 17, 1922, he gave his approval to the new edition of the apostolic indulgences. The new Code of Canon Law had made a change

of some importance in the regulations governing indulgenced objects of piety, and the new edition of apostolic indulgences duly takes note of the change. I will indicate in what the change consists presently, but before doing this I will say something about the apostolic indulgences themselves.

The crosses, crucifixes, medals, rosaries, and small statues which are indulgenced must not be of brittle or easily perishable material. Pictures cannot be indulgenced, and medals must only bear the images of saints that are canonized or whose names are in the approved martyrologies. In order to gain the apostolic indulgences one of the pious objects just mentioned, blessed by the competent authority, must be carried on the person or kept with reverence in one's house. To such as do this a plenary indulgence on the usual conditions is granted on certain feasts to those who perform one of the following good works: Recite at least once a week the rosary of our Lord, or one of the rosaries, or a third part of the common rosary of the blessed Virgin Mary, or the divine office, or the little office of the blessed Virgin, or the whole office of the dead, or at least vespers or a nocturn with lauds, or the penitential or gradual psalms; or teach catechism in the church or at home to children, relatives, or servants; or charitably visit the imprisoned or the sick in hospitals, or in any way assist the poor; or assist at Mass, or celebrate it if a priest.

The feasts on which this plenary indulgence may be gained are: Christmas Day, the Epiphany, Easter Sunday, the Ascension, Whit Sunday, the Blessed Trinity, Corpus Christi, the Sacred Heart; the Purification, the Annunciation, the Assumption, the Nativity, and the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary; the Nativity of St John the Baptist; the two Feasts of St Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary; the Feasts of the Apostles and of All Saints. The usual conditions mentioned above are: Confession, Communion, and prayer according to the intention of the Holy Father.

According to Canon 924, § 2, indulgences annexed to rosaries and other pious objects are lost only when the rosaries or other pious objects altogether cease to exist or are sold.

According to a rule laid down by Alexander VII and retained until the issue of the new Code of Canon Law, indulgences annexed to these pious objects were also lost if the objects ceased to be the property of their first owner and passed into the ownership of another, or even if they were lent with a view that the borrower should gain the annexed indulgences. This rule has been abolished, and now an indulgenced object, such as a rosary, does not lose its indulgence if it is given to another person, much less if it is lent to another even with the intention that the borrower should gain the indulgence annexed to it. This and some other recent changes in the law of indulgences

may perhaps best be realized by means of a concrete example.

Mary, a good and devout Catholic, wished to gain all the indulgences that she could. Her mother died recently, and among other things left Mary her rosary beads enriched with the Dominican indulgences. On hearing that the Apostolic and the crozier indulgences enjoyed the special privilege of being gained together with others by one recital of the rosary, Mary had her beads further enriched with the apostolic and crozier indulgences. Hardly a day passed without saying her rosary, and she generally applied the fruits for the repose of her mother's soul. She had a great devotion to the Feast of Corpus Christi, and she particularly desired to gain a plenary indulgence on that day. The only remaining conditions were Confession, Communion, and prayer for the Pope's intention. She knew that if she were a daily communicant the condition of Confession was not now strictly obligatory. Moreover, if she had the practice of going to Confession at least twice a month she could gain thereby all the indulgences offered to the faithful during the month for which Confession was a condition without going to Confession again. In any case, it would be sufficient to go to Confession within eight days preceding or following the Feast of Corpus Christi. The Holy Communion might be made either on the eve of the feast, or on the feast itself, or within the octave. The

other condition of praying for the Pope's intention would have to be fulfilled on the feast itself. The condition of visiting the church is sometimes added, and Canon 923 allows such visit to be made at any time from twelve o'clock at noon on the eve till twelve o'clock at midnight which closes the feast. Prayers for the Pope's intention may be said during the visit to the church. Such a visit is not prescribed for gaining the apostolic indulgences, and so Mary must say her prayers for the Pope's intention from midnight to midnight of the feast itself.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE CONFESSOR'S STANDARD OF MORALITY

SOME writers on moral theology define their subject as the Science of Right and Wrong, the science which teaches what it is lawful or unlawful to do according to the doctrine of the Catholic Church. When the word of God, or the express teaching of the Church, or the unanimous consent of doctors condemns an action as wrong, there is no difficulty. That action is certainly wrong. In cases where there is no certain teaching of the word of God or of the Church concerning the morality of some action, there will usually be a difference of opinion among moral theologians about the lawfulness of the action in question. Some will hold that it is right, others that it is wrong, and others again will be doubtful as to whether it is right or wrong. In forming one's opinion one will naturally be influenced not only by the reasons advanced on either side, but also by the system followed in moral theology for forming one's opinion in cases of doubt. The probabiliorist will adopt the opinion which has the greater weight of reasons and authority on its side. The equiproba-

bilist will require an equal weight of reasons and authority in favour of liberty before he adopts the more lenient view. The probabilist will deem himself free to stand for liberty if there are solid grounds of reason and authority in favour of it. But whatever may be the opinion of any theologian on such a doubtful question, and whatever may be his system of morals, he will admit that any theologian or anyone of the faithful has a perfect right to follow a solidly probable opinion if he choose to do so. No theologian and no confessor can impose his private opinion on others. The theologian must not censure a solidly probable opinion, and the confessor must give absolution to any penitent who wishes to follow a solidly probable opinion, even though it is different from that of the confessor. On this point there is now practical agreement among theologians, and we owe the great boon of practical concord among theologians largely to the influence of St Alphonsus Liguori, backed by the authority of the Church.

This does not mean that probabilism is now the ideal and the standard of morality among Catholics. It simply means that no Catholic theologian and no Catholic confessor will condemn an action as sinful unless it is certainly wrong. If it is not certainly wrong, he will not venture to condemn it; he will give one who has done it the benefit of the doubt, but he will not necessarily advise it or recommend it. Probabilism is a rule for measuring the law-

fulness of particular actions; it is not a standard of conduct.

No Catholic theologian ever dreamt of making probabilism a standard of conduct. Anyone who did so would certainly run a great risk of falling below his standard and of committing sin. *He that loveth danger shall perish in it.* To make probabilism the standard of conduct would be equivalent to accepting as one's ideal in life the determination not to commit sin while claiming the liberty to do anything that is not certainly sinful. Such a standard of life is practically impossible and it is not the Christian standard. It is impossible, for practice inevitably falls below one's ideal. If a man's ideal were merely to avoid sin, he would not succeed in avoiding it. This is a matter of practical experience and knowledge of human nature which is an axiom among Catholic writers. As in archery (says Alphonsus Rodriguez) the archer must aim above the mark if he wishes to hit it, so in conduct your standard must be higher than what you expect to achieve. He then goes on to say: " Man has become so weak by sin that to attain an ordinary degree of virtue his thoughts and desires must soar much higher. But some will say: All I propose is to avoid mortal sin; this is the only perfection I aspire to. It is much to be feared that you will not reach this point you propose to yourself. Perhaps you would have reached this point had you directed your thoughts

higher; but not having done so it is probable you will never reach it, and it is very probable you will fall into mortal sin."*

The Christian standard of morality is not content with mere probabilism. In laying down his standard Christ our Lord did not say: Do all and everything that is not forbidden you. He did indeed say: If you love me keep my commandments. But he was not satisfied with that; he added: A new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you. And he was not content to do nothing for us that was not commanded under pain of sin. He laid down the standard of Christian morality more explicitly and in greater detail in the Sermon on the Mount, and the sum and substance of it is contained in the words: Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. His followers were bidden to aim at the practice of all virtues in the highest degree of perfection of which they felt themselves capable.

The confessor's standard is not different from the standard laid down by Jesus Christ. If moral theologians restrict themselves to the task of defining what is right and wrong, they intend their works to serve as helps to the confessor in the fulfilment of his office. The confessor cannot discharge his duty without knowing what is sinful and what is not sinful. The above-mentioned moral theologians teach him that. They put the key of knowledge into

* *Practice of Christian and Religious Perfection*, i, c. 8.

his hand, but they suppose that he has learnt how to use it from other sources. On this account St Alphonsus Liguori added a little work, the *Praxis Confessarii*, to his moral theology. He said that the moral theology would be defective and imperfect without it. The smaller work was intended to teach young confessors what other duties they had to fulfil in the confessional besides granting or refusing absolution for sin. It is their duty not only to absolve sinners who have the required dispositions, but to help them to avoid sin for the future and to lead a good life, by teaching them the remedies to be used against relapse, the necessity of avoiding the occasions of sin, and the virtues which they are called upon to practise. He tells them that they have a further duty toward more perfect souls, who as a rule avoid grievous sin. Such souls the confessor should introduce into the way of perfection, teaching them to esteem perfection, to aspire to it, and the way to attain it. He says that confessors who do not do this will have to render an account to God for their negligence, for they are bound as far as they can to procure the spiritual advancement in perfection of their penitents.

It is clear, then, what the confessor's standard of morality is. It is the standard laid down by Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount; it is the standard of Christian perfection according to which Jesus Christ himself lived. All are agreed on that. St Ignatius of Loyola tells us that the aim of his Society

is to work earnestly not only for the salvation of themselves and of their neighbour, but for their perfection also. His motto and that of his Society is not merely the glory of God, but the greater glory of God. All our activity should be directed to that end.

As far as I am aware, no Catholic writer who is acquainted with the subject would deny anything that I have said so far. If this is the case, some may be tempted to think that it is a pity that these principles are not more explicitly stated than they are in most modern books on moral theology. They are taken for granted and their explicit treatment is left to writers on ascetic and mystical theology. Such a course is not without danger of being misunderstood. There is some danger of bare right and wrong, the standard of these works on moral theology being mistaken for the standard of Christian morality. Some such confusion of ideas appears to lie at the root of much of the prejudice against probabilism which still exists in many non-Catholic and in some Catholic minds.

Principally on this account we welcome the new course of moral theology inaugurated by Father A. Vermeersch, S. J., the Professor of Moral Theology at the Gregorian University in Rome. The first volume has just appeared, and it is entitled *Theologiae Moralis Principia, Responsa, Consilia.*

He regards moral theology as the science not only

of right and wrong, but as the science of Christian perfection and beatitude. He looks forward with confidence to a new golden age of moral theology, but to realize this hope he is conscious that much remains to be done by modern writers on the subject. They must in the first place make a more thorough study of the rational basis of that portion of moral doctrine which is not above natural reason. In the next place, they must give a more honourable place to the treatment of the principles of Christian perfection. They have been too shy of the subject; they must treat this sublime doctrine more openly and more boldly.

An example or two will show how the proposal would work in practice.

A man comes to Confession and asks the confessor whether he is bound to go to evening service on a Sunday or not. According to the strict rules of right and wrong there is no sin committed by omitting evening service on a Sunday. But the prudent confessor who has the spiritual welfare of his penitent at heart will not be content with merely telling his penitent that truth. While telling him the truth he will add that good Catholics and those who wish to serve God generously will do more than they are obliged to do under pain of sin.

We are bound to avoid proximate occasions of sin; we are not bound under pain of sin to avoid remote occasions. The prudent confessor will not be satis-

fied with guiding his penitents always according to this bare rule of moral theology. If he can get nothing more from the penitent, he must perforce give absolution and dismiss his penitent in peace. But frequently he will be able to get more from well-disposed penitents. In such cases he will suggest that it is a very useful form of self-denial to refrain from frequenting even remote occasions of sin when this can be done without relatively serious inconvenience. It will be the safer and the better way if it is done without scrupulosity.

These examples will serve to show what Father Vermeersch means by *Consilia* in the title of his book. The counsels in question are counsels of perfection, and are intended to train the young student of moral theology how to guide his penitents in the higher paths of virtue.

It is in reality a return to the older methods of treating the science of morals. The distinction between ordinary and perfect virtue was well known to the ancient Stoics. Cicero adopted it in his work *On Duties*, which was based on an earlier work of the Stoic Panaetius.* St Ambrose made Cicero's treatise the model of his own work which bears the same name. He lays down the distinction between ordinary and perfect virtuous action in the same terms that Cicero uses, and then adds that he can prove its validity equally by the authority of holy Scripture.†

* *De Officiis*, i, c. 3. † *De Officiis*, i, c. 11.

He then shows from the passage concerning the rich young man in the nineteenth chapter of St Matthew, and from the Sermon on the Mount, that the distinction had an important place in the teaching of our blessed Lord. This treatise of St Ambrose was the first Christian work on systematic morals, and it has had very great influence both on the canon law and on the moral theology of the Church.

St Alphonsus Liguori attributed the rigoristic doctrine which prevailed in some quarters in his time to a practice of confounding counsels with precepts. The danger of this being done with his book is obviated by Father Vermeersch by marking clearly what is only of counsel. If this be done we can see nothing but good likely to be the result of this return to an older method of treating moral theology.

## CHAPTER XV

### EXTREME UNCTION

WHEN a man realizes that the time of departure from this life has come, he sees things in a new light. He is about to enter on a new kind of existence about which he knows little. Still, he is aware that his future lot will depend on how he has lived on earth, and naturally his thoughts wander back on the past. He has committed sins, perhaps grave ones, and he is not certain whether they have been forgiven. Even if he is not conscious of serious wrongdoing, he knows that life was given him for a purpose, for an end, and he has thought so little about it. He has lived for the most part for his own selfish ends, not to do the work that was assigned him to do. And so his mind is filled with anxieties about the future and fears for the past.

Jesus Christ knew the needs of human nature thoroughly, and he provided special spiritual help for the Christian soul in the supreme moment of death. He instituted the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, the last anointing, in order to give the supernatural help of his grace to the dying Christian soul. This Sacrament is hinted at by St Mark, and it

was promulgated by St James in the well-known passage of his Epistle: " Is any man sick among you ? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him " (St James v 14, 15).

That passage of St James contains practically the whole teaching of the Catholic Church about the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. It is a sacred sign whereby, through the institution of Jesus Christ, divine grace is given to the sick. The Sacrament of Penance was instituted especially for the remission of sin, and its reception is ordinarily necessary for the forgiveness of mortal sins committed after baptism. But sometimes a dying man cannot receive the Sacrament of Penance, he is unconscious and cannot make his confession. In such a case the priest will first absolve the dying man conditionally and then administer Extreme Unction. For Extreme Unction is the complement and completion of the Sacrament of Penance, and so if there be the necessary disposition of sorrow in the soul, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction will forgive what sins remain to be forgiven.

As St James says: " If he be in sins they shall be forgiven him." Other effects besides the forgiveness of sin are produced by the grace infused into the soul of the dying by Extreme Unction. According to the

soul's dispositions the grace of the Sacrament remits more or less of the temporal punishment still due to past sins, and it fills the soul with hope in God's goodness for the future and with the assurance of his mercy for the past. It thus soothes and consoles the dying and helps them to be conformed to God's will. The peace of mind, which is the result, reacts upon the body and not infrequently produces the most marked results. Bodily recovery is not infrequently one of the effects of Extreme Unction; but that this effect may follow, its reception should not be too long delayed. Canon 944 prescribes that all care and diligence should be used so that the sick may be fortified with the grace of the Sacrament while they are still fully conscious.

In this matter as in others extremes should be avoided. The priest should not be called in for every slight ailment, nor, on the other hand, should friends put off sending him notice until the sick man is at the last gasp. There is a middle course, and it should be followed in sick calls as in most other things. The parish priest should be called in as soon as a sick parishioner is in real danger of death. Usually the doctor will have been called in previously, and the question will have been put to him: "Is there any danger, doctor?" An affirmative answer will be the signal for sending for the priest, and it will be an indication to him that it is a case for the administration of the last sacraments.

The parish priest of the place should be called in, for Extreme Unction, like Baptism and Marriage, is a parochial Sacrament. If the parish priest cannot be had, another priest may be asked to perform his duty for him. Extreme Unction can only be given once in the same sickness, unless after receiving Extreme Unction the sick man recovers and subsequently falls again into the danger of death. This Sacrament can only be received by one who has been baptized, has come to the use of reason, and is in danger of death from sickness. Old age is a kind of sickness, and so as soon as it can be said with truth of an aged person that he may die at any time from old age, Extreme Unction may be administered. It may not be administered to soldiers who are going into battle and may never return alive, nor to criminals who are about to undergo capital punishment; they are not in danger of death from sickness. On the other hand, if a person has undergone an operation, or has been wounded, and is now in danger of death from shock or from loss of blood, he may receive Extreme Unction. In the same way a mother who is in danger of death from childbirth may be anointed.

## CHAPTER XVI

### HOLY ORDERS

BY his public preaching and miracles Jesus Christ strove to gather round him followers from every state of life. As necessary conditions of fellowship with himself he required from all absolute faith in his teaching and an honest endeavour to live lives in conformity with that teaching. From the great majority he asked no more. He permitted them to continue to follow the course of life which they had pursued hitherto. But from a chosen few he asked much more. "You have not chosen me," he said, "but I have chosen you. I will not call you servants but friends." He required them to leave their homes and their occupations and to help him in his public ministry. He sent them to preach in his name and by his authority what they had learnt from him. They were to sanctify men by means of the sacraments which Jesus Christ instituted for the purpose. "Going, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them." He himself had come on earth to reconcile men with God by granting them the remission of their sins, and he sent them with the same mission. "As the

Father hath sent me I also send you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." After instituting the blessed Eucharist at the Last Supper, he gave his Apostles, as he called them, power to do what he had just done: "Do this in commemoration of me." In other words, besides the authority to rule his flock, Christ gave his Apostles a spiritual power to administer the sacraments which he instituted and thus to sanctify the members of the Church of Christ. And so to enable them to fulfil the mission which he had given them, Christ invested his Apostles with a twofold power, the power of jurisdiction and the power of Orders. Our Lord needed no special rite or ceremony to confer these powers on his Apostles. All power had been given to him, and the mere manifestation of his will was sufficient to invest his Apostles with these spiritual powers for the salvation of souls. It was otherwise with the Apostles themselves. The Church was to last to the consummation of the world. And so in imitation of their Master, and in obedience to his will, they chose from among the followers of Christ faithful men to whom they transferred the gifts which they had received from Christ for the salvation of souls.

But they had not the full power of Jesus Christ. They could not institute sacraments; they were only "the dispensers of the mysteries of God." We know

from many passages of the New Testament that the Apostles transferred the power of Orders to the men who had been chosen by means of a special rite or sign. St Paul admonishes Timothy "to stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands." And he tells Titus that "for this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and shouldest ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed thee." From these and similar passages we see that the successors of the Apostles in the spiritual ministry were "ordained" by a special rite consisting essentially of imposition of hands and of prayer. This imposition of hands and prayer was an effective sign of the grace given them for the due exercise of the ministry. The men chosen were called bishops, presbyters, and deacons, thus testifying by their very name that they were not the successors of the priests and levites of the Old Law, but that they belonged to a new dispensation. The sacred ministers of the New Testament are not appointed by men; they are ordained and receive grace for their ministry by means of a special rite called the Sacrament of Holy Orders. It is Christ alone who can confer grace by means of an external sign.

What has been said will explain certain canons of the new Code of Canon Law.

*Canon* 948.

By the institution of Christ Orders distinguishes clerics from laymen in the Church for the government of the faithful and for the ministry of divine worship.

*Canon* 107.

By divine institution there are in the Church clerics distinct from laymen, although all clerics are not of divine institution.

*Canon* 109.

Those who are admitted into the ecclesiastical hierarchy are not selected by the consent or vocation of the people or of the secular power; but they are constituted in the grades of the power of Orders by sacred Ordination.

As the Apostles did not choose Christ but he chose them, so Christ continues to choose his special friends and ministers to this day. In other words, there is a special divine vocation to the Christian priesthood. Canon 1353 bids priests, and more especially parish priests, to preserve with peculiar care from the contagion of the world boys who show signs of an ecclesiastical vocation, to train them to piety, to teach them the first rudiments of letters, and to foster in them the germ of a divine vocation.

The signs that God has given a boy a vocation to be a priest are not very difficult to detect. In the first

place, he will have certain qualities of mind and of body, for when God calls anyone to fill a certain office, he grants him all the gifts that are required for the purpose. These qualities will enable him to acquire the necessary knowledge and to exercise the duties of the priesthood with decency and edification. Then by his grace he will enlighten his mind and draw his affections to himself and his service. These graces will make him see the dignity of the Christian priesthood, cause him to esteem it and to aspire to it. Above all, they will teach him that he must do all that in him lies to make himself worthy of an honour which angels may envy.

## CHAPTER XVII

### A PRIEST'S BLESSING

THE essential rite of the Sacrament of Holy Orders consists of the imposition of hands and prayer. To this essential rite the Church has added many subordinate ceremonies. They serve to bring out more clearly the dignity, the office, and the duties of the priesthood. Although they do not cause grace by their mere application to a rightly disposed subject as the sacraments do, yet they are not mere ceremonies. They are sacramentals, sacred rites which have been instituted by the Church in imitation of the sacraments. They do not give sanctifying grace, but they obtain actual graces from God if they are properly administered and properly received. They do this through the prayers and merits of the Church. She is the well-beloved spouse of Christ, and her prayers are always acceptable to God and are heard by him. The sacramentals which have been instituted by the Church are very numerous. She is anxious to do all she can for the spiritual and temporal good of mankind, and especially of her children. They are divided into

consecrations and blessings. In consecrations use is made of holy oil, which itself is a sacramental. Consecrations with holy oil are reserved to bishops, but sometimes priests are empowered by the Holy See to administer them in special cases. Examples of such consecrations are the consecration of churches, altars, bells, chalices, abbots, and kings. Blessings without the use of holy oil may be administered by priests unless they are reserved to the Pope or to others. Examples of such blessings are the blessing of candles, ashes, palms, holy water, the priest's blessing at the end of Mass, the blessing with indulgences of rosaries, medals, statues, the blessing of houses, the blessing of women after childbirth. Some of these blessings are constitutive, others are invocative. Constitutive blessings, like consecrations, make the person or thing blessed sacred. They take them out of the sphere of what is profane and place them by the authority of the Church in that which belongs to the service of God. Sacred persons and things should be treated with reverence, says Canon 1150, and should not be devoted to profane or improper uses. Merely invocative blessings do not make a person or thing sacred; in the name of the Church they ask God to grant some spiritual or temporal favour to what is blessed, or to those who use it in accordance with the intention of the Church.

Among the sacramentals which are used in the ordination of priests, one of the most striking is the

anointing of the priest's hands with oil of catechumens blessed by the bishop on Holy Thursday. The ordaining bishop kneels before the altar and intones the "Veni Creator." He then rises, sits down on his chair with his back to the altar, and those who have just been ordained kneel before him one by one and lay their hands open and placed together on the bishop's lap. With the oil of catechumens the bishop anoints the palms of the open hands, drawing a cross from the thumb of the left hand to the index finger of the right and from the thumb of the right hand to the index finger of the left. While doing this he says the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to consecrate and sanctify these hands by this anointing and by our blessing." The ordinand answers "Amen." The bishop continues: "That whatever they bless may be blessed and whatever they consecrate may be consecrated and sanctified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." The ordinand again answers "Amen." The hands are then joined and bound together with a napkin till the ordination is finished, and then they are washed. Thus, by a sacred rite appointed by the Church, using the authority of the Church, the bishop dedicates and consecrates the priest so that he becomes an instrument of blessing others in the Church's name. When he uses the form of blessing appointed by the Church, it is the Church who blesses by means of his ministry. As the effect of the sacraments does not depend on the

faith or virtue of the minister of them, so the effect of the blessing of a priest does not depend on the faith or virtue of the priest. The sacraments derive their efficacy from the merits of Christ; the sacramentals derive theirs from the merits of the Church, the spouse of Christ. It is this faith which causes good Catholics to show special reverence to the consecrated hands of a priest. They kneel down and kiss the hands of a newly ordained priest; in Catholic countries a priest is greeted by kissing his hand. Out of respect for the anointing of the palms of his hands when he was ordained, a priest's hands are anointed on the back when he receives Extreme Unction on his deathbed.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### MINISTRATION OF SACRAMENTS TO NON-CATHOLICS

DISCUSSING the question whether one who has become unconscious in the actual commission of a grave sin may be absolved conditionally, St Alphonsus thinks it probable that a Catholic may be absolved conditionally in those circumstances.* He then adds a paragraph to the following effect: "I said a Catholic may be absolved conditionally, for the contrary must be held with regard to a heretic, as Holzmann rightly observes. For heretics ought not to be absolved, even though they exhibit signs of repentance in such a case, unless they ask expressly for absolution; since such heretics can never be prudently presumed to make those signs with a view to confession, of which they have the greatest horror."

Canon 731, § 2, appears at first sight to go further even than St Alphonsus, for it lays down the following rule:

It is forbidden to administer the sacraments of the Church to heretics and schismatics, even if they are in good faith and ask for them, unless they have previously abjured their errors and have been reconciled with the Church.

* *Theol. Mor.*, vi, n. 483.

This prohibition against administering the sacraments to those who do not belong to the visible unity of the Church is founded on the very nature of the sacraments and on one of the reasons for their institution. They were instituted, as the Catechism of the Council of Trent teaches, " that there might be certain marks and symbols, by which the faithful might be distinguished; particularly as, to use the words of St Augustine, ' no society of men, professing a true or a false religion, can be knit as it were into one body, unless they be united and held together by some federal bond of visible signs.' Both these objects, then, the sacraments of the New Law accomplish, distinguishing as they do Christians from infidels, and connecting the faithful themselves by a sort of holy bond. Besides, another very just cause for the institution of the sacraments may be shown from the words of the Apostle: ' With the heart we believe unto justice; but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation; for by the sacraments we seem to profess and make known our faith in the sight of men.' "*

The sacraments, then, are bonds which knit together the members of the visible Church of Christ on earth; they are signs by which those members are distinguished from those who do not belong to the visible unity of the Church, and they are outward professions of the faith of Catholics. They cannot,

* *Op. cit.*, Part II, c. 1, q. 9.

then, at least as a general rule, be administered to those who do not belong to the visible unity of the Catholic Church. If anyone wishes to receive them, he must make his submission to the Church and become one of her visible members.

Is this rule so universal that it applies to the case even of one who is in danger of death? This does not seem to be the mind of the Church. The sacraments exist for the sake of men, not men for the sake of the sacraments, and when there is question of the salvation of a soul in danger of death, we may sometimes do what under other circumstances would be unlawful. Thus St Thomas teaches* that it was never the custom of the Church to baptize the infant children of infidel parents against the parents' wish, and that to do so would be to act against natural justice. However, Canon 750, § 1, lays down that—

An infant child of infidel parents is lawfully baptized, even against the wish of its parents, when its life is in such danger that it is prudently anticipated that it will die before attaining the use of reason.

So that a sacrament may sometimes be administered to one who is in danger of death who could not lawfully receive it if he were not in such danger. There are, however, special difficulties in applying this doctrine to the case of adults who are not Catholics.

For the sanctification and renewal of the interior

* *Summa*, II-II, q. 10, a. 12.

man in the case of adults God requires the voluntary reception of his grace, as the Council of Trent defined. Some sort of intention or wish to receive the sacraments is necessary for their valid reception; and for the fruitful reception of the sacraments of the dead (Baptism and Penance) at least implicit acts of faith, hope, and sorrow for sin are necessary. A heretic or schismatic who is in good faith may have faith and hope, and even sorrow for sin, although many of them do not know that sorrow for sin is a necessary condition for its forgiveness by God. Usually a tactful priest could induce a dying heretic or schismatic to elicit acts of faith, hope, and contrition if he was still in possession of his senses. There is more difficulty about the required intention, especially in the case of the Sacrament of Penance. Most non-Catholics reject the Sacrament of Penance and abhor the idea of confessing their sins to a priest, and on this account, as we have seen, St Alphonsus denies that a heretic can be absolved even conditionally.

Some good authorities hold, however, that an implicit intention, such as is contained in a wish and readiness to do whatever God has ordained, is sufficient for the validity of Baptism, and others extend this to the Sacrament of Penance.* If the dying non-Catholic is still conscious, Lacroix indi-

* Bucceroni, *Analecta ecclesiastica*, 1897, p. 430; *Casus*, ii, p. 151.

cates how he may be disposed for absolution by the priest. This author says: "If a Catholic priest hears that a non-Catholic is in danger of death, he acts prudently, if nothing stands in the way, if he goes to him, elicits with him acts of faith, hope, charity, and perfect contrition for his sins. If circumstances allow, he may ask afterward whether he would not wish to embrace another religion if he knew that he was not in the true faith, and do all that was necessary for salvation; whether he would not wish to confess and be absolved, if this were necessary for salvation. If he answers in the affirmative, he can be absolved conditionally."*

There may be danger of giving scandal both to Catholics and to non-Catholics by admitting even dying heretics to the benefit of the sacraments in this manner. Catholics may be shocked at it, and non-Catholics may be encouraged to remain outside the one true Church of God. Such scandal should be obviated or removed as far as possible by the priest who acts on this opinion.

But the question arises, Does this opinion still retain its probability after the issue of the new Code of Canon Law? Does not Canon 731, § 2, forbid the administration of the sacraments to heretics and schismatics, even if they are in good faith and ask for them, unless they have previously abjured their errors and have been reconciled with the Church?

* Lacroix, lib. vi, pars 2, n. 1866.

That canon certainly lays down the general rule which should be followed in ordinary cases. But, as we have already seen, general rules with regard to the administration of the sacraments should yield to the necessities of a soul whose eternal salvation is at stake. In such a case the sacraments may be administered conditionally even when there is only a slight probability that they are validly received. *Sacramenta propter homines.* In this case there are special reasons for maintaining that the opinion favourable to the administration of the sacraments to non-Catholics who are in danger of death still retains its probability in spite of Canon 731, § 2.

Among the documents quoted by Cardinal Gasparri as illustrating Canon 731, § 2, is the decree of the Holy Office, July 20, 1898. That decree is important and bears on the question at issue, and so I will give it here at length:

*Fer. IV, July* 20, 1898.

The following case was proposed for solution to this Supreme Congregation of the Holy, Roman, and Universal Inquisition.

Boniface, leading the arduous life of an apostolic missionary in the countries of the Oriental schismatics, while sitting on a certain day in the tribunal of penance, among others found Agatha, who humbly and earnestly asked him if she might make to him a general confession of her past life. Boniface agreed to Agatha's request, and listened to her and helped

her with the greatest patience and charity. But after the good woman had confessed her sins with admirable order, clearness, burning faith, humility, and abundance of tears, she added that she had never so faithfully opened her conscience to her own priests, because of their bad morals and because they cared nothing about the seal of confession, and then she asked her confessor to give her permission to confess to him always in future so that she might worthily receive the Holy Eucharist in her own Church.

On hearing this the confessor discovered that she did not belong at any rate to the body of the Catholic Church, and with some anxiety he asked himself how he might pass judgement in keeping with the spiritual good of the penitent. First of all, he asked her about the principal articles of the faith and found her sufficiently well instructed. Then he cautiously asked her what she thought of schism, and of the necessary faith in and submission to the Catholic Church and to its visible Head. To this she answered: " I am a Christian; I do not know what schism is; I acknowledge one true religion of Christ everywhere, in which I desire to live and die; it does not belong to me to pass judgement on questions which arose among priests and should be settled by them with Christian charity. Wherefore," she proceeded, " as to-morrow on account of a special feast large numbers of our people go to Holy Communion, I beg you, holy Father, that since you have heard my confession, you may grant me absolution for my sins,

for which I am heartily sorry, so that with joy I may receive Holy Communion."

Boniface admired the woman's constancy, and since on his part he was certain of her good faith, and on the other he much feared that more conversation would do her more harm than good, considering that he acted rightly Boniface absolved Agatha, since she had made her confession and was sorry for her sins. Nor did he prevent her from receiving Holy Communion at the hands of a schismatic minister, silently permitting what in itself he could not grant, especially as he well knew that the sacraments, ceremonies, and prayers among the schismatics in question contain nothing that is not Catholic.

Hence the questions are asked:

1. Can material schismatics who are in good faith be sometimes absolved?

2. Can they be allowed at least tacitly to receive the sacraments in their own churches sometimes and to assist at sacred functions there?

3. Did Boniface act rightly, and what advice should be given him?

Furthermore, in a General Congregation of the Holy, Roman, and Universal Inquisition held by the Eminent and most Reverend Lords Cardinals, General Inquisitors in matters of faith and morals, on the above-mentioned questions being proposed, and after the vote of the most Reverend Consultors had been taken, the same most Eminent and most Reverend Fathers ordered the following answers to be given:

To No. 1.—Since scandal cannot be avoided, in the negative; except when in danger of death, and then with scandal effectually removed.

To No. 2.—In the negative.

To No. 3.—In the negative; and the confessor should be admonished that with leave of the penitent he may warn her opportunely and cautiously.

Leo XIII approved this decision, July 22, 1898.

It follows from the answer to the first question that, whilst the sacraments may not, as a general rule, be administered to non-Catholics, even though they are in good faith and ask for them, yet this may be done for them when they are in danger of death, if scandal be obviated.

## CHAPTER XIX

### EXCOMMUNICATION

A COMMON assertion of modern rationalists is that Jesus Christ did not found the Catholic Church. The foundation of the Church, they say, was the work of the Apostles, and especially of St Paul. The theory is in flat contradiction with the Gospels and with history. It is not my intention to show this by direct proof. Catholics are familiar enough with the argument. But indirect confirmation of the familiar argument may be derived from the doctrine of excommunication, and the doctrine itself is important, and so I propose to say a few words about it here.

The Catholic Church is the Communion of Saints, the society, the fellowship, the brotherhood, the union of men and women who make profession of believing in the Gospel preached by Jesus Christ, and of living according to the rules of conduct taught by him. Jesus Christ himself called the society which he established his Church, and he said that he would found it on St Peter as on a rock. In case any offence was offered to a member of the

Church, the offended party was commanded by Christ to endeavour to draw the offender to repentance by brotherly admonition given in private at first, and then before witnesses. If such admonitions were fruitless, Jesus bade him tell the Church, "and if he will not hear the Church," said the Master, "let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." He was to be treated as no longer belonging to the Church, he was no longer a member of it, he was no longer of the flock of Christ, of the kingdom of God and heaven, he was one of the outside world, no better than a heathen and a publican.

And on the spot the Apostles were given authority to cut delinquents, who refused to submit to the Church, off from communion and fellowship with her. And their sentence of excommunication would be effective before God as well as before men. "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven." Any association, society, or union has power to expel refractory members and to deprive them of the benefits of membership. Obviously Jesus Christ was not content to gather together a number of individual and separate believers and followers. He formed them into a society, a union, or a communion, and as every society must have a head, he made St Peter the head of the society which

he called his Church. And so the doctrine of excommunication presupposes the Catholic doctrine of the Church, and the doctrine of the Church implies the doctrine of excommunication. The Apostles, and notably St Paul, made use of the power of excommunicating delinquents which had been conferred on them by Christ. St Paul commanded the Corinthian Christians: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . with the power of our Lord Jesus to deliver [him who had been guilty of incest] to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." The incestuous Corinthian was to be thrust out of the Church into the world, out of the kingdom of God into the kingdom of Satan, so that he might repent and be saved at last. In the same way St Paul "delivered up to Satan" the heretics Hymeneus and Alexander. He excommunicated them for heresy. Excommunicated heretics were to be avoided, as St Paul wrote to Titus. Christians were forbidden to hold communion with them. Even St John, the Apostle of meekness and love, forbade Christians to receive heretics or to say God-speed to them.

The chief effect of excommunication has always been expulsion from the Church, deprivation of membership in the divine society founded by Jesus Christ. While this general effect has been constant, minor details connected with it have varied somewhat

at different periods of the Church's history. I subjoin a summary of the effects of excommunication according to the new Code of Canon Law, Canons 2259 ff.:

(*a*) An excommunicated person is deprived of the right to assist at the divine offices of the Church, or at those religious functions which require the power of Orders, and can only be exercised by clerics, such as Mass or Benediction, but not sermons.

(*b*) He is deprived of the use of the sacraments and sacramentals.

(*c*) If a priest, he is forbidden in general to administer the sacraments.

(*d*) He loses the right to indulgences, suffrages, and the public prayers of the Church. The faithful, however, may pray privately for him, and priests are not forbidden to say Mass for him privately and without giving scandal. But if the excommunicated person was excommunicated by name and others were commanded to avoid him, Mass can only be offered for his conversion.

(*e*) An excommunicated person is forbidden to exercise ecclesiastical offices and functions; to hold posts in ecclesiastical courts; to act as sponsor in Baptism and Confirmation; and to vote in ecclesiastical elections.

(*f*) He is forbidden to exercise any act of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, whether of the internal or of the external forum.

(*g*) He is forbidden to elect, present, or nominate

to ecclesiastical posts; he cannot acquire ecclesiastical dignities, offices, or benefices; nor can he be promoted to Orders.

The Church punishes many serious offences, such as joining secret societies and marrying in the Protestant Church, by excommunication.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE CHRISTIAN HOME

WE all know something of what we owe to the Christian home; few of us realize all that we owe to it. That great and holy institution is being attacked from without and from within. Facilities for divorce, neo-Malthusian practices, the unrestrained freedom of modern life, and many other causes tend to break up the home. A brief statement of some points of Catholic doctrine on the home will furnish matter for serious consideration, and, I hope, tend to stay disruptive tendencies.

My statement is taken chiefly from the new Code of Canon Law, and I will try to make it as clear as possible, without rhetoric or useless amplification on my part. Jesus Christ is the architect of the Christian home. His teaching and example laid the foundations of it.

It rests on Christian marriage. Christian marriage is something more than a mere natural union between a man and a woman. It is a lifelong union between baptized Christians, and it is one of the Seven Sacraments of the Christian Church. Because it is a

sacrament it is a sign of holiness, and it produces holiness in those who receive it worthily. Moreover, it is a figure of the indissoluble and holy union which exists between Christ and his bride, the Church. Canon 1013 tells us that the primary end of marriage is the procreation and education of children; the secondary end is mutual help and society, and a remedy against passion. Sometimes it may not be possible to have children, but even then marriage is justified and made lawful by the existence of the secondary end. The parties desire mutual help, support, and consolation, or they need an outlet for natural appetite.

The procreation of children is the natural aim and object of marriage, "whence," says the Catechism of the Council of Trent, "married persons who by drugs either prevent conception or procure abortion are guilty of a most heinous crime; for this is to be considered an impious conspiracy of murderers." In his Encyclical Letter on Marriage Leo XIII taught how this primary end had been exalted and sanctified by Christ. "There has been vouchsafed," he said, "to the marriage union a higher and nobler purpose than was ever previously given to it. By the command of Christ, it not only looks to the propagation of the human race, but to the bringing forth of children for the Church, fellow-citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God; so that a people might be born and brought up for the worship and

religion of the true God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Hence the importance of giving a religious and moral education to Christian children in accordance with their faith. As Canon 1113 teaches:

Parents are bound by the strictest obligation to provide for their children as far as possible both religious and moral as well as physical and civil education, and also to provide for their temporal good.

Canon 1372 lays special stress on positive religious and moral training:

All the faithful are to be trained from childhood in such a way that not only is nothing to be given them which is hostile to the Catholic religion and to purity of morals, but religious and moral training should hold the first place.

According to § 2 of the same canon, not only parents but all those who are in the place of parents have the right and the most serious duty of taking care that their children receive a Christian education. A consequence of these principles is drawn by Canon 1374. This canon forbids Catholic children to be sent to non-Catholic, neutral, or mixed schools which are frequented by non-Catholics. It belongs exclusively to the bishop to decide, according to the instructions of the Holy See, in what circumstances and with what precautions an exception to this rule may be tolerated in particular cases.

The sentence of excommunication is inflicted by the Code on those who gravely neglect their duty in this matter. By Canon 2319 Catholics incur excommunication reserved to the bishop if they contract marriage with an express or implicit agreement that all or any of the children are to be educated outside the Catholic Church. The same penalty is incurred by those who knowingly presume to offer their children for baptism to non-Catholic ministers. The same penalty is extended to parents and to those who hold the place of parents who knowingly give their children to be educated or trained in a non-Catholic religion. Besides the penalty of excommunication, all these also incur the suspicion of heresy.

We see from all this what a very serious view the Church takes of the obligation of Catholic parents to provide a Catholic education for their children.

## CHAPTER XXI

### PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE

THE Catholic Church is well aware that marriage is the state of life for the great majority of her children. She knows also how much of their well-being in this life and in the next depends on what sort of a marriage they contract. She would not be the wise and kind mother that she is if she did not do all in her power to help them in the most important crisis of their lives. She has had long experience, she knows human nature thoroughly, and, moreover, she is guided by the spirit of God himself. As a matter of fact, there is scarcely any point connected with marriage on which the Catholic Church has not definite teaching and laws of her own. That teaching and those laws are directed towards procuring the good of mankind, they have stood the test of experience, they can be trusted. I propose here to describe very briefly what the Catholic Church teaches and prescribes with regard to the preliminaries of the marriage of her children.

According to Canon 1067, a man before completing his sixteenth year of age and a woman before

completing her fourteenth year are incapable of contracting a valid marriage. The second section of the same canon bids the pastors of souls do what they can to prevent too early marriages, even after the attainment of the canonical age. They should do what they can to induce Catholics to follow in this matter the approved usage of the country in which they live. The characters of the parties should be sufficiently developed, and they should have acquired sufficient experience of life to enable them to manage a home of their own.

In the important matter of selecting a partner for life sentiment and natural attraction have their legitimate influence. Still, if the choice is to be a wise one and if the marriage is to turn out a success, other things besides sentiment must be taken into account. There should be no diriment or prohibitory impediments between the parties, and they should have their parents' consent from the beginning. There should be health of body and mind on both sides. It would be disastrous to marry a consumptive or one subject to fits. It is to be a lifelong union, and mere good looks are but a weak foundation for such a union. Common sense teaches that sterling qualities of mind and heart should be preferred to a comely exterior without those qualities. As a general rule, a partner should be chosen from the same condition of life; marriages which do not conform to this rule are seldom successful. If these restrictions

are to be observed, it means that young people of marriageable age should not allow themselves to drift into marriage unawares. They should have the strength of character and the common sense to break off an undesirable intimacy while there is yet time. They should stop in time. It goes without saying that, besides the true faith, good morals are a necessary condition for a happy Catholic marriage.

It is difficult to treat of company keeping in public, but the matter is of such importance that something must be said on it. The attitude of the Catholic Church towards company keeping is dictated by her teaching. She teaches that before actual marriage the same laws of chastity bind those who are keeping company as bind other unmarried persons. She also teaches that it is grievously sinful to expose oneself without corresponding necessity to the proximate occasion of committing mortal sin. The Church is well aware of the danger of company keeping, and it may be said that where the custom prevails she tolerates rather than approves it. Under her guidance theologians lay down the rule that only those persons may begin to keep company with each other who are at liberty to marry and who intend to marry within a reasonable time. A reasonable time is commonly interpreted as about twelve months. So that those who do not intend marriage should not keep company, and those who for some years to come will not be in a position to marry should wait until

about twelve months before the time when they will be in a position to fulfil their intention. Christian prudence requires that due caution should be used by the parties and by their parents during the time of company keeping. Theologians agree on the rule that as much as possible they must avoid being together alone without any witnesses as to their conduct. As far as possible they should have a companion, or keep in the public gaze. It is well to bear in mind that the Church does not recognize a merely informal promise of marriage and that it produces no canonical effects. In order to be recognized by the Church and produce canonical effects a promise of marriage must be in writing, signed by the parties and by the local Ordinary or parish priest or by two witnesses.

Marriage is a parochial sacrament, and it should ordinarily take place in the parish church before the parish priest of the district in which one of the parties has a domicile or quasi-domicile or at least has dwelt for a month. As a rule, the parish church of the bride is to be chosen if the parties belong to different parishes.

About a month or six weeks before the day fixed for the marriage the parties should present themselves to the parish priest and tell him of their intention. He will put certain questions to them unless he knows them well, and ask for their baptismal certificates unless they were baptized in the church

in which they are going to be married. The parish priest will see that the banns are published on three successive days of obligation. As soon as may be after seeing the parish priest one of the parties should give notice of the intended marriage to the Superintendent Registrar of Marriages in the district. Twenty-one days afterwards the same party will demand the certificate of the Superintendent Registrar and take it to the parish priest. The time of the marriage will be fixed and communicated to the Registrar so that he may be present, unless the Nonconformist Marriage Act has been applied to the parish church. By the law of the Church the parties should have been confirmed, and before marriage they should go to the sacraments.

## CHAPTER XXII

### MARRIAGE WITH UNBAPTIZED PERSONS

PROTESTANTS do not admit the authority of the Catholic Church, and consequently they deny that the marriage laws of the Catholic Church have any objective validity. A Protestant who has married a Catholic in the Protestant Church or in the Registry Office is offended when he is told that his marriage is null and void. He should consider the Catholic party, it is true; but when religious prejudice stands in the way it is not easy to look at things from other people's point of view. Sometimes, unfortunately, the Catholic party does not regard the marriage from the Catholic point of view; sometimes he or she is ignorant of the Catholic point of view. In any case, it will be worth while to try to make the Catholic position clear with regard to an important part of the marriage law of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church has made laws for the regulation of Christian marriage from the earliest times. Some of these laws, like that which prescribes banns before marriage is contracted, make marriage un-

lawful and sinful if it is contracted against and in spite of the law; but they do not make it null and void. Such laws are called in technical terms merely prohibitory impediments of marriage. Other laws are more stringent: it is of greater importance that they should attain their object, and so for good reasons they not only prohibit marriage and make it unlawful and sinful, but they render it null and void, if it is attempted against and in spite of the law.

Such laws as these are called in technical language diriment impediments of marriage, like consanguinity in the second and third degree. When a marriage has been contracted in spite of the existence of a diriment impediment between the parties, the marriage is no marriage at all; after the ceremony the parties are just where they were before it: they are not man and wife.

The history of the impediment, which is known as difference of worship or difference of religion, will illustrate what has been said. In the second epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians occur the words: "Bear not the yoke with unbelievers." In these words St Paul forbade the Christians of Corinth to enter into any close and intimate relations with those who were not baptized. Of all close and intimate relations marriage is the closest and most intimate, and so in these words St Paul prohibits the marriage of Christians with pagans. At first it was only a prohibitory impediment; it forbade marriage between a Christian

and a non-Christian, but it did not make it null and void. However, as Christians multiplied and pagans decreased in number, custom made the law more stringent, and from the eighth to the twelfth century difference of religion gradually became a diriment impediment of marriage.

A marriage, for example, between a Christian and a Jew was no marriage at all, unless a dispensation from the law had been obtained from the competent authority. The impediment bound all baptized Christians, even those who had separated from the Catholic Church by schism. There is a well-known case of an Anglican who had married an Anabaptist in England. He quarrelled with the Anabaptist and married a Lutheran woman. He subsequently asked to be received into the Catholic Church, and it was necessary to determine whether his second marriage was valid. The case was sent to Rome, and there it was decided that if the man had been baptized and the Anabaptist was not baptized, the first marriage was invalid and the second valid.

The Code of Canon Law has made an important change in this impediment. Canon 1070 is as follows:

§ 1. Marriage contracted by a person not baptized with a person baptized in the Catholic Church or with a convert to it from schism or heresy is null.

§ 2. If a party at the time of contracting marriage was commonly held to be baptized or if his baptism

was doubtful the validity of the marriage must be upheld in accordance with the rule of law that marriage is favoured by the law, until it is proved for certain that one of the parties was baptized and the other not baptized.

The canon mentions only those who have been baptized in the Catholic Church—that is, those who have received baptism with a view to their incorporation as members in the Catholic Church. It says nothing expressly about baptized non-Catholics. However, according to the common interpretation, the effect of this canon is to restrict the impediment of difference of religion to baptized Catholics; baptized non-Catholics are no longer subject to the law. The change may be illustrated by the case of the Anglican who married an Anabaptist mentioned above. We saw that this marriage was declared null and void and the second marriage upheld. Since the new Code came into force, if such a case of marriage contracted after May 19, 1918, were brought into court, the decision would be reversed. The first marriage would be declared valid and the second invalid.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### MARRIAGE BEFORE THE CATHOLIC PRIEST

ONE Sunday afternoon Mary Coglan put on her cloak and hat and sallied forth to visit her friend Belinda Strongbow. They had been girls together at school, and ever since they had kept in touch with each other. Mary's home was intensely Catholic, and she had grown more attached to the Catholic religion by leading a devout Catholic life amid its fostering influences. Moreover, she was intelligent, and had deepened her knowledge of the Catholic religion by solid reading. The home influences of Belinda were in the opposite direction, and her reading was almost confined to a ladies' weekly and to a few novels which scarcely tended to edification. Mary had heard that her friend Belinda was going to be married in the Registry Office, and the news greatly pained her. On that Sunday afternoon Mary put on her cloak and hat with a view to visit Belinda and see if she could induce her to change her mind and, like a good Catholic, begin her married life by being married properly in the Catholic Church. She made up her mind that she was not going to quarrel with her

friend. That would only do harm. She would try quietly to get Belinda to see the matter as she saw it.

When she came to the house where the Strongbows lived Mary knocked at the door, and it was opened immediately by Belinda herself.

"I am delighted to see you, Mary," said Belinda; "I am the only one at home; all the rest have gone out for the afternoon."

Mary took off her hat and cloak, and Belinda led her into the parlour. Mary thought it quite providential that she had found her friend alone, and as soon as she was seated, without beating about the bush, she went straight to the subject that was uppermost in her mind.

"I hear, Bel," she said, "that you are going to be married."

"Yes," said Belinda, "I hope it will come off in a week or two."

"And is it true that you are going to be married in the Registrar's Office?" asked Mary.

Belinda looked out of the window as she said: "Yes: Henry wanted it; we want to get it over as soon as possible, and with as little fuss as we can manage."

"But," replied Mary, "marriage is the most important thing in life: everything depends on it. Happiness here, happiness hereafter, depend on a happy marriage."

"Well, but why should Henry and I not have a happy marriage in the Registrar's Office?" asked Belinda.

"Your conscience, Bel, won't leave you at peace."

"Why not?" again asked Belinda.

"Because it isn't a marriage at all," replied Mary.

"I don't see that," said Belinda. "It's legal."

"That is," replied Mary, "the law accepts it as marriage; but the law cannot make it marriage if it is not marriage."

"I don't see that," said Belinda.

"You heard of the case of Lady Strange," replied Mary.

"Yes; I was reading about it when you knocked."

Lady Strange was a Catholic who, after getting a divorce from her husband, had lately married again in the Registry Office.

"Lady Strange's second marriage was legal, but you don't consider it a real marriage, do you?" asked Mary.

"No," said Belinda; "but then she was already married to another man, and what God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

"So that," said Mary, "a marriage may be legal and yet be no marriage at all in reality and in the sight of God?"

"Of course it may," said Belinda. "If a priest attempts marriage in the Registry Office it is legal, but not a marriage in reality. If two Catholics

who are cousins marry in the Registry Office without a dispensation there is no real marriage, although the law accepts it as a legal marriage. I see that."

"Well, but on the same grounds," replied Mary, "you should agree with me that if a Catholic marries in the Registry Office the marriage is legal, but in reality and before God no marriage at all."

"That is what my parents did," said Belinda, "and nobody ever said that they were not really married."

"Yes, your parents were really married," admitted Mary, "because they married before the change in the law of the Church on this point. In 1908 the new law of the Church came into force, and since that year Catholics cannot really marry unless they marry before the parish priest."

"What was a true and real marriage before 1908 is no longer a true and real marriage, then?" said Belinda.

"No, because the law of the Church in England was changed in that year," answered Mary. "Just as a certain law of the Church made the marriage of priests and of first cousins no marriage at all, so in England in the year 1908 a certain law made marriage in the Registry Office no marriage at all for Catholics. Catholics have always acknowledged that the Church has authority to make such laws: 'Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven,' said our Lord to

his Apostles. Catholics, who know that marriage is a great sacrament, and one of the most important events in life, should not embark on it hastily and without the blessing of the Church."

"Thank you, Mary," said Belinda. "I know that kindness has made you speak to me so frankly. I will see if I can get Henry to agree to have the marriage in the Catholic church. Will you come as my witness?"

"I shall be delighted," said Mary.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### MARRIAGE IN THE PROTESTANT CHURCH

FAITH is the first and most fundamental condition of membership in the Catholic Church, Faith received and professed in baptism. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned. The Catholic Church is essentially the union, the communion of the faithful, of those who profess the Faith of Christ. That Faith must be preserved, whole and entire. If any article of the Faith is denied, membership in the Church is lost. "He that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven." A Catholic can deny the Faith either explicitly or implicitly. If he says that the Pope is not the visible Head of the Church militant on earth, he denies the Faith explicitly, and ceases to be a member of the Church. If he joins in heretical worship, or receives a sacrament in the Protestant church, he denies the Faith implicitly.

Christian marriage is one of the Seven Sacraments, and so a Catholic who attempts marriage,

or who goes through the form of marriage before a Protestant minister, implicitly denies the Faith, and is guilty of at least an external act of heresy. This was the constant teaching of the Church before the issue of the new Code of Canon Law. On February 17, 1864, the Holy Office issued an Instruction on the subject. It laid down that to express matrimonial consent before a Protestant minister acting in his religious capacity was to take part in an heretical rite, to give implicit adhesion to heresy, and that it was an act of communication with heretics in divine worship. Such an act entailed excommunication, and so if one who had been guilty of such an offence sought absolution he was first of all to be absolved from the censure of excommunication.

This teaching has been made more clear and definite in the new Code of Canon Law. In Canon 1063 we read:

> Although a dispensation for a mixed marriage may have been obtained from the Church the spouses cannot, either before or after contracting marriage before the Church, also go before a non-Catholic minister of religion acting as such, in order to express or renew their matrimonial consent in person or through proxies.

By Canon 2319 any Catholic who violates this precept incurs excommunication, and the removal of this excommunication is reserved to the bishop.

We have already seen what effects are produced by excommunication. As long as a Catholic remains under the censure of excommunication he ceases to be a member of the Catholic Church. He has no right to assist at Mass or Benediction, but if he presents himself at those services he need not be turned out, unless he was excommunicated by name and the faithful were commanded to avoid him. Before obtaining absolution from his censure he cannot be absolved from his sins, and so he cannot receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion. He receives no benefit from the public prayers of the Church, nor can he gain indulgences. He cannot receive the blessings of the Church, and he is forbidden to act as sponsor in Baptism or Confirmation. In spite of these and other penalties incurred by those who fall under excommunication, ignorant and negligent Catholics sometimes go through the form of marriage before a Protestant minister in a Protestant church. Unless he has altogether lost his Catholic faith and feeling, such a one will take means to be reconciled to the Church as soon as possible. Let us see what steps have to be taken for this purpose. He committed a grave sin by attempting marriage in the Protestant Church, the marriage is no marriage before God and the Church, he is excommunicated, and he can only be absolved from his excommunication by the bishop or by a priest who has special

faculties for such cases. In order to be reconciled to the Church the excommunicated person should go to his parish priest, tell him what he has done, express his sorrow for it, and ask to be put straight. The marriage will have to be put right first, and sometimes that is a serious difficulty. The parish priest will have to communicate with the bishop and obtain all necessary faculties to deal with the case. He will notify the penitent when these faculties arrive and appoint a time for absolving him from censure and sin, rectifying the marriage and enabling the delinquent to begin his Catholic life afresh.

## CHAPTER XXV

### AFFINITY AND PUBLIC DECENCY

GREAT changes were made by the new Code of Canon Law in the diriment impediments of affinity and public decency. In the Christian Dispensation both these impediments of marriage are of positive ecclesiastical law. According to the old law, which was in force until May 19, 1918, affinity arose from carnal intercourse between a man and a woman. If the man and woman were married and the carnal intercourse was lawful, the affinity which arose from it annulled marriage between one of the parties and the relations by blood of the other party to the fourth degree. If the man and woman were not married, the affinity which arose from carnal intercourse between them annulled marriage between one of the parties and the relations by blood of the other party to the second degree. The origin of the impediment and its extent are changed in the new Code. According to Canon 97:

Affinity arises from valid marriage, whether ratified only or ratified and consummated.

It exists between the man only and the relations

by blood of the woman, and also between the woman and the relations by blood of the man.

It is reckoned in such a manner that the relations by blood of the man are relations by marriage of the woman in the same line and degree.

The marriage from which affinity arises, according to this canon, must be valid and ratified. Ratified marriage is valid marriage between parties who have been baptized. It would appear, then, that marriage between parties who have not been baptized cannot now give rise to the diriment impediment of affinity. Canon 1077 tells us how far affinity extends, according to the new Code:

Affinity in the direct line annuls marriage in every degree. In the collateral line it annuls marriage to the second degree inclusively.

The second section of this canon tells us how affinity is multiplied.

The impediment of affinity is multiplied:

1. As often as the impediment of consanguinity from which it proceeds is multiplied.

2. When another marriage is successively contracted with a relation by blood of a deceased spouse.

These rules of law may be illustrated by concrete examples. If two brothers, John and Thomas, of one family, marry two sisters, Mary and Jane, of another family, their issue will be related to one another by blood in the second degree of the col-

lateral line. A man called Alfred married Alice, the daughter of John and Mary. After the death of Alice, he wished to marry Ann, the daughter of Thomas and Jane and doubly the cousin of Alice his former wife. Alfred and Ann are related by marriage by a double impediment of affinity in the second collateral degree.

Again, if Titius had already successively married Caia and Bertha, two sisters, he would be prevented from marrying Sempronia, the third sister of Caia and Bertha, by a double impediment of affinity in the first degree of the collateral line.

Not less important than the changes introduced by the new Code in the impediment of affinity are those made in the impediment of public decency.

According to the old law the diriment impediment of public decency arose from valid and certain betrothal and from ratified not consummated marriage. Now, according to Canon 1078:

> The impediment of public decency arises from invalid marriage whether consummated or not, and from public and notorious concubinage, and it annuls marriage in the first and second degree of the direct line between the man and the relations by blood of the woman and *vice versa*.

Whatever be the reason of the invalidity of the marriage in practice the impediment of public decency will arise. Leo XIII, indeed, April 7,

1879, declared that a merely civil marriage among Catholics had not even the outward appearance of a valid marriage, and that consequently the impediment of public decency did not arise from it. Now, however, even when a merely civil marriage has been contracted, the parties will live together as if they were man and wife, and thus they will contract the impediment at least from public and notorious concubinage.

Concubinage will be public and notorious, according to Canon 2197, "if it is already divulged, or if the circumstances are such that it may and should be prudently judged that it will easily be divulged."

By the new law the extension of the impediment of public decency has been considerably limited. It only affects the direct line and does not extend beyond the second degree, so that a man who has contracted it cannot marry the mother, grandmother, daughter, or granddaughter of the woman, and *vice versa*.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### SOCIETIES, SECRET AND OTHER

MAN is essentially a social animal. He is conscious of his weakness and helplessness in the face of the many dangers by which he finds himself surrounded. He needs the society of his fellows in order to develop his intellectual and moral nature. Jesus Christ knew human nature thoroughly, and when he came on earth for the salvation of mankind he determined to save it in and through a Society founded by himself, which he called his Church. Man's social nature is not satisfied with belonging to one great natural society which we call the State or Nation. He forms innumerable smaller corporations which are comprised in the one supreme society of the nation. He thus belongs to some particular county, or city, or town, and, according to his profession or trade, he joins an association of lawyers, architects, engineers, or a trade union of workmen. Much in the same way, man's social nature is not satisfied with belonging to the one great supernatural Society founded by Jesus Christ. He forms himself into innumerable

subordinate and dependent associations. He belongs to a particular province, or diocese, or parish, and, if he chooses, he may join some religious order, or pious union, or confraternity. The number of such institutions in the Catholic Church is almost bewildering, and it should not be difficult for each one to find what specially suits his own needs.

The Catholic Church shows no desire to cramp the social instincts of her children, but it is her duty to guide them and prevent them from going astray. She does this in various ways. There are some societies which she condemns, others she approves, others again she neither condemns nor approves; she allows Catholics to use their liberty and join them if they like on their own responsibility.

Canon 684 tells us that—

The faithful are worthy of commendation if they join associations which are erected or at least approved by the Church; but let them keep aloof from secret societies, from those which are condemned, seditious, suspect, or which strive to withdraw themselves from the lawful vigilance of the Church.

In this canon Catholics are forbidden to join five kinds of societies.

First, they must keep aloof from secret societies,

which often under oath require a promise of secrecy from their members even towards ecclesiastical and civil authorities, and blind obedience to the orders which may be given them by the heads of the secret societies. Certain secret societies have been condemned by name. By Canon 2335 those Catholics incur excommunication simply reserved to the Holy See who join the Freemasons or other societies of the same kind which machinate against the Church or lawful civil authority. The Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office issued a decree on August 20, 1894, condemning by name the three American societies known as the Oddfellows, the Sons of Temperance, and the Knights of Pythias. The American Oddfellows during the course of last century separated from the English society of the same name, and developed a quasi-religion and ritual of their own.

Seditious societies are such as by violent and unlawful means strive to attain ends which in themselves may be lawful. Under suspect societies we may place such as the Young Men's Christian Association, against whose activity bishops were warned by a letter of the Holy Office dated November 5, 1920.

Any society of Catholics which endeavours to elude the lawful vigilance of ecclesiastical authority thereby falls under suspicion.

The Church positively recognizes only those

societies which have been erected or at least approved by herself. The erection of certain societies is reserved to the Holy See, which frequently empowers delegates by indult to erect them. Unless the contrary is expressly stated in the indult, the exercise of such a privilege requires the consent of the local Ordinary. But the consent of the local Ordinary for the erection in any place of a religious house implies consent for the erection in that house or in the church annexed to it of a society which is not constituted after the manner of an organic corporation and which is peculiar to the religious order to which the house belongs. The local Ordinaries have authority to erect associations whose erection has not been reserved to others by the Holy See. There are three kinds of religious societies of laymen.

Third Orders, like that of St Francis, have for their primary object the promotion of a more perfect Christian life among their members. Pious Unions, such as the Society of St Vincent of Paul and the Apostleship of Prayer, have for their object the exercise of certain works of piety or charity. The Code gives the name of Sodalities to those Pious Unions which are constituted after the manner of an organic corporation with presidents and officials. Sodalities erected for the increase of public worship are called by the Code Confraternities in the strict sense. Archconfraternities have

power to aggregate to themselves associations of the same kind.

Such institutions as these are so numerous in the Catholic Church that nobody can possibly belong to them all. It is desirable that each one should select one or two which are compatible with each other and to which he is attracted, and endeavour to practise the good works enjoined with as much fidelity and constancy as possible. He will thus, with the blessing of God, obtain the benefits which the Church had in view when she instituted these associations.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE MYSTICS' QUEST

WE can know God from his works; as we gaze at the noble building we can learn something from it about the Architect. Jesus Christ, who is in the bosom of the Father, has revealed to us much more about God than we could have known from reason alone. We can, then, also know God by faith. Can we know him in any other way? Yes, answer the mystics in chorus, we can know God by experience, we can acquire experimental knowledge of God. If we prepare ourselves by shutting out the distractions of the world, by curbing the insolence of the passions, by denying the curiosity of the senses, and by concentrating our attention on our innermost selves, there, in the depths of the soul, we shall acquire an experimental knowledge of God, we shall know by experience that he is, we shall see God.

This is the claim of the mystics. Is it valid? Dom Cuthbert Butler, O.S.B., examines this claim in his book, *Western Mysticism*, recently published. His method of testing the claim is purely

historical. He calls as witnesses St Augustine, St Gregory the Great, St Bernard, St John of the Cross, and gives their evidence concerning the claim of the mystics. No one will question the competence of the witnesses. They were all good and holy men, they were all great mystics, and, besides, they were all practical men of affairs. They were not given to dreaming dreams and afterwards publishing them to the world as realities. They were men whose evidence we can trust when they give testimony from their personal experience. They give testimony in favour of the mystics' claim, and so Dom Cuthbert Butler, on the authority of his witnesses, thinks that the claim is valid.

But to what precisely do the witnesses testify? They do not testify to their having seen God face to face. St Gregory and St Bernard are both emphatic in teaching that while he is in this life man cannot see God face to face as he is. That will constitute the happiness of heaven. St Augustine says that in the stroke of a trembling glance he on one occasion touched that which is. He has described his experiences in similar terms on other occasions.

The meaning of such passages as these in St Augustine has long been a subject of controversy. He used the neo-Platonic philosophy in his exposition of Christian doctrine much in the same way as St Thomas subsequently used that of Aristotle.

The expression, then, is neo-Platonic, the thought is Christian. This explanation has always been given by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church who were keen students of St Augustine and who entered most deeply into his mind. Dom Cuthbert Butler says that it would be extravagant to suppose that St Augustine taught that the direct and immediate intuition of the Godhead was the ordinary object of mystical contemplation. However, he thinks it probable that St Augustine himself was persuaded that he had occasionally during his life seen God face to face. One or two passages, he thinks, seem to imply that. Of course, even if it could be shown that St Augustine thought this, it would not prove that it was so in reality.

Christian mystics hold that, as a general rule, with a very few possible exceptions, no man hath seen or can see God in this life. But if this be so, to what sort of experimental knowledge of God do our witnesses lay claim? They claim a greatly enhanced conviction and realization of the presence of God within the soul, a deeper understanding of God and of divine things, a more ardent love of him, a contempt for earthly joys, a conquest of sin, bad habits and inclinations, a longing for their heavenly home. In the highest state of ecstasy and rapture these effects are so pronounced and vivid that the soul which experiences them would sooner doubt its own existence than the intimate

presence of God within it when the experience takes place. It is in this way that the great Catholic mystics claim to have an experimental knowledge of God. There is no difficulty in admitting the reality of the experience. It is merely the more or less intense realization of what the Catholic faith teaches us. As Christians, we believe that in God we live, move, and have our being. He transcends his creation, it is true; but it is equally true that he is immanent in every part of it. He makes the human soul in the state of grace his temple and dwelling-place. He bears towards it an infinite love. The souls of the saints are in love with God. What wonder is it if these two lovers, in intimate presence with each other, manifest their mutual love, and the divine caresses cause the soul transports of joy? The wonder would be if such things did not happen. Catholics, then, have no difficulty in believing what the great saints have written about their mystical experiences. Although the experiences of the Saints are on a higher scale, still they are of the same nature as those which ordinary Catholics frequently enjoy.

After a good confession, the soul now at peace with God not unfrequently has the experience of the prodigal son—his Heavenly Father falls on his neck and kisses him. Quite commonly in Holy Communion a vivid realization of the intimate presence of God and of his love causes the soul

the purest transports of joy. Realization of the presence of God and union with him are ordinary exercises of Catholic piety. The Catholic, then, has no difficulty in admitting the claims of the mystics when they are described in such terms as the foregoing.

The highest phase of experimental knowledge of God is known by various names, such as divine espousals, ecstasy, rapture, entrance into the divine darkness. The human soul is finite, and when its Infinite Creator deigns to show himself to it, the wondrous sight fascinates it. All its powers of mind, will, and feeling are concentrated on the marvellous vision. It becomes entranced, withdraws itself from all bodily activities except those which are necessary for life, and neither sees, hears, nor feels anything of the external world. Divine revelations and visions are usually granted to the saints while they are in a state of ecstasy or trance. But ecstasy, rapture, and trance are not always the effect of the supernatural action of God on the human soul. They may be produced by natural causes.

If the soul is absorbed by the contemplation of an object and at the same time powerfully attracted to it, the result may be a natural trance or ecstasy. Many cases of such ecstasies are on record. Archimedes, the famous mathematician of Syracuse, in Sicily, is said to have been killed by the Roman soldiers who captured the city while he was in a

state of trance. Plato tells us that Socrates would sometimes stand in one place for a whole day and night, absorbed in thought, as if rooted to the spot. While composing his *Principia,* Newton would sometimes remain half-dressed on his bed, absorbed in thought.

The case of Lord Tennyson, the poet, has become almost classical. From boyhood upwards he had the power of putting himself in a state of trance. This he did by repeating his own name two or three times silently to himself when alone. All at once his individuality seemed to dissolve into boundless being. The resulting state was not one of confusion, " but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, and the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility."

The ecstasies of Plotinus are specially famous in the literature of mysticism. He was the leader of the neo-Platonists of the third century of the Christian era. St Augustine read his works and was much influenced by them. As a young man he was brought by them to reject Manichæism and to embrace Christianity. For some time after his conversion he had a great regard for Plotinus, and he used his system of philosophy in the exposition of Christian doctrine to the end of his life. Some of his best-known mystical passages are couched in the language of Plotinus and are redolent of his

style. In the Appendix to his work on *Western Mysticism* Dom Cuthbert Butler has collected from Plotinus the chief passages dealing with his ecstasies.

We will transcribe a few of these, for they raise a problem of some interest and importance:

"Then we can see God and ourselves, as far as is permitted: we see ourselves glorified, full of spiritual light, or, rather, we see ourselves as pure, subtle, ethereal light; we become divine, or, rather, we know ourselves to be divine. In the vision of God that which sees is not reason, but something greater than and prior to reason. We ought not to say that the seer will see, but he will be that which he sees, if indeed it be possible any longer to distinguish seer and seen, and not boldly to affirm that the two are one. In this state the seer does not see or distinguish or imagine two things; he becomes another, he ceases to be himself and to belong to himself. He belongs to God and is one with him. If a man could preserve the memory of what he was when he was mingled with the divine, he would have in himself an image of God, for he was then one with God."

"The soul is above Being while in communion with the One. If, then, a man sees himself to have become one with the One, he has in himself a likeness of the One, and if he passes out of himself, as an image to its archetype, he has reached the end of his journey. And when he comes down from his

vision, he can again awaken the virtue that is in him, and, seeing himself fitly adorned in every part, he can again mount upward through virtue to spirit, and through Wisdom to God. Such is the life of the gods, and of godlike and blessed men; a liberation from all earthly bonds, a life that takes no pleasure in earthly things, a flight of the alone to the Alone."

Plotinus describes ecstatic bliss in these terms:

" When after having sought the One, the soul finds itself in its presence, it goes to meet it and contemplates it instead of itself. What itself is when it gazes, it has no leisure to see. When in this state the soul would exchange its present condition for nothing, no, not for the very heaven of heavens; for there is nothing better, nothing more blessed than this. It judges rightly and knows that it has what it desired, and that there is nothing higher. It is not deceived in its happiness; it fears no evil while it is with the One or even while it sees him; though all else perish around it, it is content, if it can only be with him; so happy is it."

There is a tone of sincerity and of personal experience in these descriptions written by a pagan philosopher. Porphyry, the biographer and editor of Plotinus, tells us that Plotinus occasionally enjoyed this union with God, and that he prepared himself for it and made it possible by following the method described by Plato in the *Banquet*.

Anyone who will compare the famous passage in the *Banquet* in which Diotima the prophetess instructs Socrates in the way to contemplate perfect Beauty will at once be struck by its resemblance to the foregoing and other similar passages in Plotinus. But what is the relation between these and the mystical experiences of St Augustine and other Christian saints? Dom Cuthbert Butler abstains from passing any judgement on this question. We will venture an opinion on the subject. The problem is: Are the claims of Plotinus or of some Indian mystic equally valid with those of St Teresa, St Augustine, St Gregory, and St Bernard? The question raises the subject of the discernment of spirits.

All Christians must admit that God loves all men and illumines every man that cometh into the world. The Spirit breatheth where he will, and he can choose his friends wherever he will, as he chose holy Job of old. If he grants special favours to a non-Christian under the New Law, it is without doubt with a view to bringing him later to a full knowledge of the truth, and full membership with the divine Society founded by Jesus Christ. Moreover, ecstasies and raptures are not signs of sanctity by themselves, even when they come from God. They belong to the number of those graces which are specially said to be given gratuitously. They do not necessarily imply holiness in the recipient

of them, they do not necessarily make him holy: they are given for the sake of others. Furthermore, as we have seen, ecstasies and raptures may be merely natural, and due to very various causes.

Our faith, then, does not require that we should at once reject the claims made by non-Catholic or non-Christian mystics. A good Catholic will do the bidding of St John: "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God." The discerning of spirits is sometimes a special gift of God, according to St Paul. But, to help those who can lay claim to no special gift, Catholic writers on mystical theology have drawn up certain well-known rules for the discernment of spirits taken from holy Scripture, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. We will apply some of those rules to the test case of the ecstasies of Plotinus.

Dom Cuthbert Butler expresses the opinion that St Augustine accepted the ecstasies of Plotinus "as fully religious mystical experiences." He grounds this opinion on a passage taken from an early work of St Augustine, written shortly after his conversion. In that passage St Augustine excuses himself from describing the joys of mystical contemplation, for, he says, "certain great and incomparable souls have told it, as far as they thought it should be told, whom we believe to have seen and to see these things." Dom Cuthbert Butler thinks that "the great and incomparable souls"

refers to Plotinus, who had died in the previous century. For my part, I find it very difficult to believe this. It is true that at this time St Augustine had a high opinion of Plotinus and his philosophy. But in the passage quoted above St Augustine asserts not only that these great and incomparable souls have seen God in the past, but that they see him now. This would be equivalent to canonizing Plotinus. St Augustine always retained a great esteem for the philosophy of Plotinus, but, whatever he thought of the man shortly after his conversion, he certainly thought little of him in after life. In his *Retractations* he expresses sorrow for having praised the Platonists too much, for they are " wicked men, against whom it is necessary to defend Catholic doctrine." In the tenth book of the *City of God* he gives Plotinus the credit of knowing God, but he accuses him of not glorifying him as God nor giving thanks, of becoming vain in his thoughts, and of being responsible for the errors of the people, partly by teaching them and partly by not daring to correct them.

Plotinus was indeed the leader of the neo-Platonist movement, and that movement was a vain attempt to put new life into dying paganism in its fruitless struggle with Christianity. Some, perhaps, would ascribe the ecstasies of Plotinus to the power of the devil, just as Benedict XIV does not scruple to ascribe the alleged miracles of Pythagoras to

diabolical influence. In support of their view they might point out that Plotinus thought himself divine, and although he professed adherence to the popular pagan worship, yet he did not frequent the temples. "Why should I go to the gods?" he said. "They should rather come to me." Pride is one of the chief signs of the devil's influence, as humility is a sign of God's operations in the soul.

But really it is not necessary to have recourse to preternatural influences in order to explain the ecstasies of Plotinus. The natural powers of the human soul are quite sufficient to explain them. Porphyry, his biographer, tells us that Plotinus in his mystical contemplations followed the method described by Plato in the *Banquet*. This method, he says, was four times successful with Plotinus during the six years that he knew him, and once it was successful in his own case. Plotinus' ecstasies, then, were merely the natural effect of philosophical contemplation. After careful preparation, the follower of Plato made the ascent of the ladder of being, concentrated his attention on the contemplation of the One, the True, and the Good, and if circumstances were favourable he was occasionally rewarded by the vision of perfect Beauty fashioned by himself. Unless I am mistaken, that is the simple explanation of the ecstasies of Plotinus and of many another so-called mystic.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### MYSTICISM, FALSE AND TRUE

FOR some years past mysticism has been in great vogue. According to Miss Underhill, this was to be expected and is quite natural. The nineteenth century was a period of great expansion and progress in science, the arts, literature, and politics; and after such a period it was to be expected that a period of renewed interest in mysticism would succeed. For mysticism is humanity's finest flower; it is the product at which all the great creative epochs of the race have aimed.

A Catholic holds that true mysticism is not a product of nature but of grace. Nature may indeed furnish the occasion for the manifestation of grace. And so he would prefer to explain the modern interest in mysticism as a revolt of the spiritual nature of man aided by grace against the secularism and materialism of the age. He would consider that the fact that mysticism also flourished in the sixteenth century confirmed his contention. Undoubtedly the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were periods of great expansion, but they were also periods of great religious and moral depravity. But

God did not leave himself without witnesses then; it may be that he does not wish to leave himself without witnesses now, and on this account has inspired the renewed interest in mysticism.

However this may be, Catholics are always interested in the spiritual life, a term which they prefer to mysticism. They are interested to see how St Augustine, Dionysius the Areopagite, Richard of St Victor, St Teresa, St John of the Cross, and innumerable other heroes of theirs are studied and quoted by modern non-Catholic writers on mysticism. Many of these writers display abundant industry and learning. Although they generally give the pre-eminence to great Catholic mystics like St Teresa and St John of the Cross, yet they class with them, as belonging to the same category, pagan philosophers such as Plato and Plotinus, Eastern sages of China and India, and men like Jacob Boehme and William Blake. They usually show want of insight into Catholic doctrine, and detect similarity of teaching where little or none exists. I will quote one or two instances of what I mean. Professor Rufus M. Jones writes:

"Mysticism in its narrow and exact historical significance is a doctrine of union with the Absolute. It implies a certain metaphysical conception of God and of the soul, and it implies further a mystic way of obtaining union with the Absolute. The fundamental metaphysics in which the doctrine

of Christian mysticism is grounded is Greek rationalistic metaphysics formulated by Socrates and his great successors, Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus. God, according to this Greek interpretation, is Absolute Reality, Pure Being, Perfect Form, with no admixture of matter—*i.e.*, with no potentiality or possibility of change. God is that which absolutely is, one, permanent, immutable, and free of everything that implies process or becoming. He cannot therefore be found in finite things, or in transitory happenings, or in passing states of mind. He is utterly beyond the *here* and the *now*, he is for ever above all that can be seen or felt or known or named. There is, however, something in the human soul which is unsundered from the Absolute, something which essentially is that Reality. There are many names for this unsundered something in the soul: 'pure reason,' 'active reason,' 'creative reason,' 'recollective faculty,' 'apex of mind,' 'abyss of mind,' 'ground of consciousness,' 'synteresis,' 'divine spark,' 'word of God,' 'inward light,' 'uncreated centre.' However it may be named, it is conceived as an original ground or junction of soul with God, an unlost and inalienable soul-centre, the source and basis of all real knowledge of absolute truth, of the idea of the Good, and of all ideas of universal significance. The soul can know super-empirical reality only because when it sinks to its deepest centre it is one with that reality, it is identical with what it knows.''*

* Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, ix 84.

Dean Inge writes:

"Greek Christianity remained predominantly Neoplatonic; Gregory of Nyssa and Basil are full of echoes of Plotinus and his school. With Augustine Latin theology follows the same path. Plotinus, read in a Latin translation, was the schoolmaster who brought Augustine to Christ. There is therefore nothing startling in the considered opinion of Rudolf Eucken that Plotinus has influenced Christian theology more than any other thinker [since St Paul, he should no doubt have added]. From the time of Augustine to the present day Neoplatonism has always been at home in the Christian Church."*

These extracts give expression to the current view with tolerable accuracy and fulness. That view maintains that Catholic spiritual teaching is derived rather from Plato and neo-Platonists than from Christ. The subject is a large one, but I propose to treat here of only a small portion of it. The aim of mysticism or of the spiritual life is to attain to union with God, as Mr. Rufus M. Jones says. Let us see what this union implied in the doctrine of Plotinus, and what it implies in Catholic teaching. It will then be clear whether Catholic teaching on the point is derived from neo-Platonism.

It may be admitted at once that some of the terminology of the subject was borrowed by St Augustine

* *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, i 11.

and by Dionysius the Areopagite from the Neoplatonists. They found it ready made to their hands, and it was suitable for their purpose. With great insight, Plato and the Neoplatonists discerned the soul's longing for the Source of its being, and they expressed those natural desires of the soul in very beautiful language. But their ideas of God, of the human soul, and of their relations to each other, were quite different from the teaching of the Catholic Church on the same subjects. The terms used by Neoplatonist mystics received a quite different meaning when they were used by St Augustine and others to describe the spiritual teaching of the Catholic Church. In much the same way the term Logos is used by the Alexandrian Jew Philo and by St John, but with very different meanings.

Making large use of the labours of Dean Inge, I will first of all state briefly the views of Plotinus on the Absolute Godhead, on human nature, and on their relations to each other.

The philosophy of Plotinus is often obscure, arbitrary, and inconsistent with itself; but his opinions on the subjects just mentioned may be summarized as follows:

The whole of Reality is spiritual, knowable, and single. There is a hierarchy of Being gradually sloping from the lowest to the highest. In this hierarchy there are no gaps and chasms, there is no absolute barrier between the human and divine,

between the natural and the supernatural. There is one universal substance.

There are two fundamental trinities in the hierarchy of Being, the Absolute (the One, the Good), Spirit and Soul; and in man, spirit, soul and body.

The One Absolute Being is beyond existence, beyond Spirit and life, ineffable. He does not think, is not conscious, but he knows himself by direct intuition; he abides in a state of wakefulness beyond being. We must not attribute will to the One, but we may say that he is what he willed to be, for he posited himself. As the source and goal of revelation he cannot be revealed, as the source and goal of knowledge he cannot be known.

The One is the First Cause, but as the spiritual and phenomenal worlds are coeternal with the One, causality means little more than a hierarchy in Reality, leading up to the all-embracing Absolute, in which everything is contained. In fact, the Plotinian philosophy is a sort of spiritualistic pantheism.

The One generates Spirit. The One turned towards himself and looked, and this seeing is Spirit. Where Spirit energizes in itself the objects of its activity are other spirits, but where it energizes outside itself, soul. There is nothing to prevent soul becoming spirit, nor is there any barrier between spirit and the One.

The ineffable Godhead is supra-personal. In

Heaven the Godhead is an atmosphere rather than a person.

Matter is a mere abstraction. It is immaterial, it is the bare receptacle of forms, the subject of energy, that intangible, impalpable, all but nothing, which remains when we abstract from an object of thought all that makes it an object of thought.

The universal soul casts upon matter a reflection of the forms which it has received from above, and the material world springs into being.

Before our birth we existed as pure souls and spirits attached to the universal soul. We neither come into being nor perish. At death a soul that has sinned may be sent for punishment into another body, even that of a beast. Good souls return to the universal soul, but they retain their separateness potentially. Soul by discipline may become spirit, the highest part of man's nature. Spirit is the self-consciousness or the self-contemplation of the Absolute.

We can know God by the discursive reason, but we are also capable of attaining a much more perfect knowledge of him and of intimate union with him. We come from the One, we are part of the One, we can return to and, contemplating, be absorbed in the One. The beatific vision is natural to man; all have the faculty, but few use it. The soul must free itself from earthly desires, withdraw its attention from earthly objects, and, becoming spirit,

concentrate its gaze on the contemplation of the One. We will now let Plotinus speak for himself in Dean Inge's translation: the beauty of thought and language is manifest, but no less evident is the essential Pantheism:

"We always move round the One, but we do not always fix our gaze on it; we are like a choir of singers who stand round the conductor, but do not always sing in time because their attention is diverted to some external object; when they look at the conductor they sing well and are really with him. So we always move round the One; if we did not, we should be dissolved and no longer exist; but we do not always look towards the One. When we do, we attain the end of our existence, and our repose, and we no longer sing out of time, but form in very truth a divine chorus round the One. In this choral dance the soul sees the fountain of life and the source of Spirit, the source of Being, the Cause of Good, the root of Soul. . . . In it our soul rests, out of reach of evil; it has ascended to a region which is free from all evil; there it has spiritual vision, and is exempt from passion and suffering; there it truly lives. For our present life without God is a mere shadow and mimicry of the true life. . . .

"We must, then, hasten to depart hence; to detach ourselves as much as we can from the body to which we are unhappily bound, to endeavour to embrace God with all our being, and to leave no part of ourselves which is not in contact with him. Then we

can see God and ourselves, as far as is permitted; we see ourselves glorified, full of spiritual light, or rather we see ourselves as pure, subtle, ethereal light; we become divine, or rather we know ourselves to be divine. Then indeed is the flame of life kindled, that flame which, when we sink back to earth, sinks with us. . . ."

Dean Inge told us that with St Augustine Latin theology became predominantly neo-Platonic. St Augustine read Plotinus in a Latin translation, and hence from his time to the present day neo-Platonism has always been at home in the Christian Church.

We cannot do better than let St Augustine speak for himself. In his voluminous works he makes his attitude towards Plato and the neo-Platonists quite clear.

He found much to admire in them. Before he read them he was given to sensual pleasures and found it impossible to form a clear concept of spirit. The Platonists furnished him with a spiritual philosophy of great elevation and beauty. It was the pedagogue that brought him to Christ, as Dean Inge says. St Augustine understood Plato to teach that the end of life is to live according to virtue, and that only he can do this who knows and imitates God. The Platonists are nearer than other philosophers to us Christians, because they teach that the supreme and true God is the author of all created things, the light of all intellect, the good of all action, the be-

ginning of our nature, the truth of all learning, and the felicity of life.* Without doubt St Augustine liked the Platonists and showed a tendency to interpret them in a Christian sense. Their philosophy contained much truth, which he thought that Plato had learned from the Old Testament writers. But when he began to read the Christian Scriptures, St Augustine confesses that he found in them all the truth that he had learned from the Platonists, together with the grace of God by which human passion is subdued.†

"This those writings contain not [he says]. Those pages present not the image of this piety, the tears of confession, thy sacrifice, a troubled spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, the salvation of the people, the bridal City, the earnest of the Holy Ghost, the cup of our Redemption. No man sings there, 'Shall not my soul be submitted unto God, for of him cometh my salvation? For he is my God and my salvation, my guardian, I shall no more be moved.' No one there hears him call, 'Come unto me all ye that labour.' They scorn to learn of him because he is meek and humble of heart, for these things hast thou hid from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones. For it is one thing from the mountain's shaggy top to see the land of peace and to find no way thither, and another to keep on the way that leads thither, guarded by the host of the heavenly General."

* *De Civ. Dei*, viii, c. 9 ff. † *Conference*, vii, c. 21.

So St Augustine made use of the language of the Platonists to expound Christian doctrine; he found in it the terms that he needed to express the spiritual truths of Christianity. He notes that St Paul had a habit of appealing to pagan writers and using their language, as when he preached the Gospel to the Athenians. St Augustine did the same. During the first few years of his conversion, and, as he confesses, before he knew Christian theology, he occasionally wrote things which afterwards caused him displeasure. In the *Retractations*, written at the end of his life, he laments that he gave too much praise to the Platonists in his earlier writings, bad men, he says, against whom it is necessary to defend Christian doctrine. He corrects several errors of importance which he had unwarily imbibed from them.

St Augustine recognized that the Platonic doctrine concerning God and man's true happiness was nearer to Christianity than that of other philosophers, but he also admitted that there was a long distance between them. As a matter of fact, there are profound differences between the two systems.

Such fundamental terms as God and Creation have different meanings in Plotinus and in St Augustine.

The supreme God of Plotinus, the One, Absolute Godhead, is beyond existence, beyond life, beyond Spirit; he is ineffable. He is not conscious of him-

self, although he abides in a state of wakefulness. We may not attribute will to him. He cannot be revealed. He is beyond personality and is impersonal. He may be called Creator and the First Cause, but in a special sense. From all eternity he contemplates himself, and his contemplations are the universe. The spiritual and phenomenal worlds are coeternal with himself, and everything is contained in the all-embracing Absolute. Hence the creation is necessary. With St Augustine God is and exists in the fullest and truest sense. He is Spirit, Life, Truth, Goodness, infinite Intellect and omnipotent Will, in reality and in truth. Personality is predicated of him in the fullest and most proper sense. These and similar terms are applied to creatures only in an analogous sense. Their being is essentially dependent, potential, finite. Thus there is the widest chasm between the Creator and the creature, the divine and the human, the supernatural and the natural. God can be known, though not comprehensively, by reason, by revelation and faith, and by intuitive vision. God has created all things out of nothing in the beginning of time. Before anything was created God existed alone, self-sufficient and supremely happy. He willed to create of his own free Will and infinite Goodness.

Plotinus' doctrine concerning the nature of man is not less in strong contrast with that of St Augustine.

According to Plotinus, man is made up of three

constitutent parts: spirit, soul, and body. Spirit is neither born nor dies, it has existed as a portion of the One from all eternity, and at death it returns to him. It remains distinct from the One and can be separated from him again, but in the meantime there is no difference between them; the whole spiritual world is one absolute and single being. Plotinus held not only the pre-existence of souls, but their transmigration also. Spirit is sinless, as becomes a portion of the Absolute. Why it should be imprisoned in earthly bodies is not clear in the system of Plotinus.

St Augustine teaches that man is composed of soul and body, and that both have been created mediately or immediately in time out of nothing by God. In his earlier writings he had said something which favoured the doctrine of pre-existence, but he corrected this in his *Retractations*. In the same work he also corrects another phrase which he had let drop. He had said that the soul at death returns to God; it would be better, he says, to say simply that it goes to God. He has learnt, he says, from Scripture that sin separates from God. He has no such illusion as the sinlessness of the soul, nor did he dream of imagining that the soul or the spirit is a portion of the Absolute.

Platonists placed man's supreme happiness in the intuitive vision of God. According to them, the immediate and intuitive vision of God is natural

to man. All men have the faculty, but few use it. This is quite in keeping with the main tenets of their philosophy. They held, as we have seen, that man's spirit is divine. His body, of course, cannot enter into Heaven, but the spirit is at home there, and when released from the body it returns home and becomes one with the One.

St Augustine did not quarrel with the Platonists for placing man's supreme happiness in the intuitive vision of God. But the beatific vision had quite a different meaning for him. It was not natural for man; it was the crowning reward of the supernatural order of grace, as a general rule, to be enjoyed only in the fatherland, in Heaven after death. After the resurrection the body will share in this supernatural privilege. While on earth we can see God by the light of reason and by the light of faith; the light of glory by which we hope to see God face to face is reserved for the life to come. This teaching St Augustine drew from holy Scripture. John i 18, 1 John iv 12, 1 Tim. vi 16, and numerous other texts declare that man in this life has not seen and cannot see God. *We see now through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known.** In spite, however, of this general rule, St Augustine was prepared to admit some exceptions to the contrary. The express assertions of holy Scripture seemed to him to require

* 1 Cor. xiii 12.

that we should say that Moses and St Paul, during their lifetime, in ecstasy, had seen God face to face, and he thought it probable that the same rare privilege had been granted to other saints. In well-known passages in his early work, *On the Quantity of the Soul*, in his *Confessions*, and elsewhere, there are obvious reminiscences of Plotinus and neo-Platonism; but they should be interpreted by the light of his dogmatic teaching, which they certainly do not contradict. If we want instances of neo-Platonism affecting the teaching of Christians, we must go to heretics like Arius and Eunomius. Eunomius asserted that man knows God as clearly and fully as he knows himself, and he was refuted by the great Cappadocian Fathers, St Basil, St Gregory of Nyssa, and St Gregory of Nazianzum.

Enough has been said to show what truth there is in such assertions as I have quoted from Professor Jones and Dean Inge. The union of the soul with God in mystical contemplation was believed to be physical, founded on identity of nature, by the neo-Platonists, as by all Pantheists, ancient and modern. This doctrine is quite untenable for Christians. The creature can only enter into a moral union with the Creator, founded on a harmony of mind, will, and heart with him. In Heaven, indeed, we shall see him face to face, but even then there will be an infinite distance between the seer and the seen. On earth we can only enjoy a mediate vision of

God either through reason or through faith. The assurance and heightened conviction of the mystic that he has seen God comes from himself, sometimes from the devil, sometimes from an interpretation of the action of God, who then works in the soul by the infused virtues of Faith and Charity, helped by the gifts of the Holy Ghost.*

* Benedict XIV, *On the Beatification and Canonization of Saints*, iii, c. 26.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION OF SAINTS

BENEDICT XIV begins his learned work on the Beatification and Canonization of Saints by remarking that writers on this subject usually say something by way of preface on pagan apotheosis. Some heretics, he says, assert that the Catholic practice is like the pagan, and that the one is derived from the other. The learned Pope has no difficulty in showing that there is no resemblance between the two rites, and that the Catholic practice rests on Catholic dogma and Christian history. When a Roman Emperor or Empress was cremated, someone of rank came forward and swore that he had seen the dead Emperor or Empress ascending into Heaven, and henceforth they were honoured as gods. Their lives had often been notoriously bad, but that was no bar to divine honours among the pagans.

In the Apostles' Creed we profess that we believe in the Holy Catholic Church and that the Catholic Church is the Communion of Saints. By the Communion of Saints we mean that the Catholic Church has members in Heaven, on earth, and in Purga-

tory, but that they all form one communion, one society, one body—the mystical body of Christ. Because they are members of the same body, they are interested in each other's welfare, and they can communicate with each other and help each other in need by their prayers and good works. The doctrine of the Invocation of Saints rests on this article of the Apostles' Creed. Just as we may ask any good and holy person on earth to pray for us, and we hope to benefit by his prayers, so may we ask anyone whom we reasonably believe to be in Heaven to pray for us. In private a mother may ask her baptized child who died in infancy to pray for her: the little angel knows what passes on earth, is rejoiced when sinners do penance and turn to God, and it will not turn a deaf ear to its mother's prayer. But grave scandal has sometimes arisen because public worship was paid to those who were unworthy of it. Hence from the earliest times the Church took means to prevent signs of public worship being shown to such as were alleged to have suffered death for the faith, but who had not been approved as martyrs by competent authority.

For a thousand years the competent authority was the bishop of the diocese, but in the year 1170 Pope Alexander III reserved all causes of beatification and canonization to the Holy See. In 1625 Urban VIII issued a number of decrees on the subject, and the existing law of the Church which

regulates the matter now has been codified in the new Code of Canon Law.

Whether any particular person died a holy death and may be believed to be with God in Heaven is a question of fact. Questions of fact are settled by evidence, and so the Church has drawn up elaborate legal processes whose object is to determine the question of fact whether one who is alleged to have been a saint really did live and die like a saint. But the Church is not satisfied on such a point with merely human testimony: she wishes to have the testimony of God. If it can be shown that miracles have been wrought at the alleged saint's intercession, then the Church has the testimony of God to the person's sanctity, and the alleged saint may be beatified and canonized, and be publicly invoked by the faithful. But in the whole matter the Church proceeds with the greatest deliberation and caution. Two ecclesiastical courts have jurisdiction in the beatification and canonization of a Servant of God: the court of the bishop in whose diocese the Servant of God died, and the Sacred Congregation of Rites in Rome. Each has its lawyers and officials much like those of the civil courts.

Any Catholic may begin the process for the beatification of one who has died in the odour of sanctity. One who wishes to do so will choose an ecclesiastic who will act as Postulator of the Cause and

pursue it to the end. He petitions the bishop that the preliminary processes be undertaken. Another ecclesiastic is appointed to act as Promoter of the Faith, and it is his duty to see that no unworthy candidate obtains the honours of the altar.

He is popularly known as the Devil's Advocate. The bishop issues a decree that all writings left by the Servant of God be collected for transmission to Rome, in order that they may be examined by theologians to see whether they contain anything which would be an obstacle to beatification. A diocesan court is constituted to examine witnesses concerning the fame for sanctity enjoyed by the Servant of God, and to inquire whether any marks of public worship have been shown to the alleged saint. Any such unauthorized worship would be an obstacle to the cause. The results of these diocesan processes are consigned to writing, to be deposited in the bishop's archives, and if favourable a copy is made and sent to the Sacred Congregation of Rites in Rome. These preliminaries may be begun as soon after death as is convenient, while the memory of the Servant of God is still fresh in people's minds, and friends and enemies are encouraged to come forward and give their testimony on oath concerning all they know of the cause.

In Rome the writings of the Servant of God and

the diocesan processes are subjected to a careful scrutiny, and if the result is favourable the Sacred Congregation of Rites petitions the Pope for his decree that the cause be duly introduced. The Holy See then commissions five ecclesiastical judges to make fresh inquisitions in the diocese in a triple process. These judges by apostolic authority again inquire into the fame for sanctity, the theological and moral virtues, and the alleged miracles of the Servant of God.

The results are sent to Rome, where they are subjected to the examination of the Cardinal Prefect and three other Cardinals appointed by the Pope. If their decision is favourable, a decree to that effect is drawn up, and signed by the Pope.

After this, according to law, an interval of fifty years must elapse before any further steps are taken in the cause. This interval allows all personal favour and personal animosity to disappear, so that when the case is resumed it may be tried without passion of any kind. If there is no danger of this, the Pope often dispenses so that the cause may be terminated more speedily. The Little Flower was beatified twenty-five years after her death.

When the cause is resumed, the virtues of the Servant of God are again examined in three sessions of the Sacred Congregation. The first session is held in the rooms of the Cardinal Referee, in the

presence of officials. The second is held in the Vatican, before the Cardinal Prefect and other Cardinals. The third is held in presence of the Pope and Cardinals. If the decision is favourable a decree to that effect is drawn up and signed by the Pope. The Servant of God in now called Venerable, but no signs of public worship are as yet permitted.

Then the miracles alleged to have been worked at the Venerable's intercession are examined with the help of experts. The expert doctors or men of science are required to state on oath whether the fact of at least two miracles is proved, and whether they can be explained by the laws of nature.

If all has hitherto gone in favour of the cause, a decree *De tuto* is drawn up affirming that the Pope may safely proceed to the solemn Beatification of the Venerable Servant of God. After this the Pope waits some time and commends the matter to God. At his good pleasure he sends for the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation and commands him to draw up the decree of Beatification. A day is fixed for saying the Office and Mass of the Beatified, and permission is granted to venerate a picture of the Beatified adorned with rays about the head. Various other signs of public worship are often permitted.

In order that one beatified may be canonized, at

least two additional miracles worked after the beatification must be duly proved before a commission appointed by the Pope for the purpose. When canonized all the usual signs of the inferior worship with which the Church honours the saints are permitted throughout the Church.

## CHAPTER XXX

### CATHOLICS AND SEX PROBLEMS*

THE Catholic solution of the present-day problems of sex is fundamentally different from that of the non-Christian solution of the said problems. It might be stated in the words of Alice Meynell, whose loss to Catholic literature we all deplore. In her *Shepherdess* she beautifully compares our thoughts to flocks of sheep, and the lady of our delight is the shepherdess who keeps our thoughts white and guards them from the steeps. She feeds them on fragrant heights, and when a black thought crosses our minds, she chases it away, for she wishes us to be pure and undefiled. Contrast this idea with that of the Freudian philosophers who do not believe in what they term the "repression" of evil thoughts, and who find, to paraphrase well-known lines, sex in trees, sex in the running brooks, sex in stones, and sex in everything.

To understand fully the difficulties and complexities of a wise solution of sex problems, be it noted,

* Paper read at the annual Conference of the Young Men's Society, Leeds, Whitsuntide, 1923, by T. Colvin, M.D.

as was pointed out the other day by a famous Egyptologist, that man is the same to-day as he was 7,000 years ago. Down through the ages, while there have been changes in manners and customs and social usages and beliefs and philosophies, the primal instincts of man, such as the lust of the flesh, the lust of gold, the lust of power, and a desire for ease and luxury, have remained constant in all races and in all climes, and, like Tennyson's brook, have gone on, and go on, for ever. Hence, since the world began, there have been the same conflicts of good and evil in the mind of man as we find to-day. While sex moralists and didactic writers of sex fiction may force sex problems to the front from time to time, they are only serving up to the public old wine in new bottles.

Dr. Jung, a leader of modern psychological thought, frankly tells us that his science can tell us very little of the moral attributes of man. Let, he says, the honest inquirer into the secrets of the human soul throw off his scholar's gown and go and wander through the world into all its hidden recesses and its public places, such as prisons, asylums, hospitals, taverns, brothels, dancing saloons, music halls, gambling hells, secret societies, gatherings of faddists, political meetings, the mansions of the rich and the slums of the poor. In all his wanderings let him try to experience in his own person the loves and hates, the joys and sorrows, of those with whom he

had come into intimate contact. He would return laden with richer knowledge of human nature than his yard-long textbooks and would then understand the soul of man. It is evident that no single individual could carry out the mission that Dr. Jung postulates as necessary to be an authority on the good and evil in mankind.

But there is, and has been for centuries, a body of men who have the knowledge that Dr. Jung says is necessary fully to understand the human soul. For nearly 2,000 years the Catholic priest has heard in the confessional the secret thoughts and secret deeds of a countless number of men, women, and children. While what is told in the confessional is, and has always been, as secret as the thoughts of the dead, it is natural to think that the information gained there from penitents will be utilized in ministering to other afflicted souls, just as the confessions in the consulting-rooms of a wise and trusted physician will enable him to cure a mind or body distressed. Hence, apart from her divine origin and her divine mission, the Catholic Church holds a unique position as a teacher of morality and a wise solvent of sex problems.

The first fact to be noted in attempting to solve sex problems is that " the web of our life is of mingled yarn, good and ill together."

In man we have a dual personality—a Dr. Jekyll and a Mr. Hyde—and there is constant conflict

between the two. The Christian ideal is to repress our evil desires, while the non-Christian says, Give them expression or free play. Carew tells Dr. Jekyll that the only way to get rid of a temptation to evil is to yield to it. Jekyll, after much misgiving, follows this vicious advice, and we then see the ideal physician transformed into the cruel and hideous Hyde without any bowels of compassion or mercy for his fellow-man. The logical sequence was that Hyde killed the man who first suggested to him to stifle all the finer issues of his nature as the beloved physician of suffering humanity.

In other words, if we do not rule our passions, they will certainly rule us. Let us now discuss in detail remedies for solution of sex problems. Alarmed at the laxity of morals at the present day, some people argue that, to raise the moral tone, sex hygiene should be taught to the people. There could not be a more absurd fallacy, for all the facts prove that the more people know—excluding priests, doctors, and lawyers—concerning questions of sex, the more immoral they become. As Cardinal Newman said, "To know is one thing; to do is another: the two things are clearly distinct." The expert liar does not lie less the more he knows how to do it, for he lies all the more when he knows the art of being polished and plausible in his lying. The cheat and the swindler do not cease from cheating and swindling when they know how to do it, but become con-

stant adepts at their work. Hence, in the same way, a knowledge of sex hygiene will not cure immorality, but will be more apt to increase it. A striking proof of this was brought out in the recent war. Before being sent to the front soldiers were told in lectures by their medical officers of the great risks they would run in exposing themselves to the danger of contracting venereal disease. They were told that venereal disease was the commonest cause of blindness and deafness in children, that it filled our asylums with inmates, our hospitals with patients, and was a frequent cause of unhappy and childless marriages. Notwithstanding that knowledge, thousands of our troops contracted venereal disease and brought it home to others, so that sex hygiene was of no value to them as a preventive of sin.

Again, from nearly thirty years' experience of a large general medical practice, I have been impressed by the fact that my most immoral patients were those who knew most about matters of sex, while my most moral were those who were ignorant of the subject. The young "flapper" who gives the "glad eye" to every man and displays her silk stockings for the public gaze knows more about contraceptives than the married mother of a large family. The "flapper" is repulsively unclean in her body and mind, although well versed in sex hygiene, while the married mother is, as a rule, free from venereal disease. It is the same with the young

man about town who knows all about preventives and the " packet system " of disinfection. He is grossly immoral. Again, sex teaching, especially to young people at puberty, when their passions are awakening to life and it is less easy to control them than later in life, is dangerous, for it excites prurient curiosity which is apt to lead to physical as well as to moral disaster. Hence it defeats instead of serving the purpose it has in view. Shakespeare wisely puts it, " How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds makes ill deeds done."

It must therefore be evident that sex teaching as a deterrent to immorality is as useless as it is absurd. The sovereign remedy is to teach every child and everyone to flee from an occasion of sin as they would from flames of fire that threatened to consume them.

It is likewise the lack of early and dogmatic moral teaching that is at the root of the present loose and confused thinking on the sanctity of marriage. Take, for example, a recent paternity case the publication of whose details was a lasting disgrace to British journalism and an excellent reflex of the immorality of the times in which we live. Unions in which a man and a woman mutually agree not to have any children degrade and defile the married state, and both parties ought to remain single. If a man before marriage had made up his mind to go about with his lady after marriage and leave his wife at

home, or a woman before marriage resolves to go about with her male friends after marriage without the consent of her husband, then they should both remain single, for they are only paying lip service to their vows to love and cherish each other till death doth them part.

There can be only one opinion, that the decline of morality all over Europe is symptomatic of the decline of belief in the basic principles of Christianity. When a man believes that there is no God and no hereafter, only two things will keep him moral. One is the fear of contracting disease in his immorality, and the other is the public odium of being found out in his sin by his relatives and friends. But there is a third factor he ought to consider, and that is, when a man begins a career of immorality it is not easy to bridle his lust, and he often becomes a physical as well as a moral wreck. Mr. H. G. Wells, in his latest absurd romance, makes the young prig Crystal, a boy of thirteen, say to an adult that "it weakens youth to become too early possessed by desire—which often will not leave again. It spoils and cripples one's imagination."

The Catholic Church has been telling the H. G. Wells the same thing for centuries past. She tells young men, and old men, that "he must needs go that the devil drives," and very often his ultimate destination will be a lunatic asylum. In a recent work on human character it is pointed out that it

is feeling, not intellect, or, to put it another way, it is emotion, not reason, that inspires human action. Hence the supreme importance of keeping our feelings and our desires under control.

It should begin in childhood by the parent correcting the faults of the child and training the child to conquer its evil inclinations. A spoilt child who gets everything it wishes will become a spoilt man or woman, for it will lack the power of inhibiting or controlling its desires. The safety-valves for keeping our passions in subjection when we reach manhood and womanhood are religion and social service and music and the other arts, as well as healthy and innocent sport. Let the Catholic youth take as their ideal of chastity the immaculate Virgin, who was spotless and stainless as the lily of the valley. When an unnatural desire or evil impulse comes to them they should ask her help to conquer it. If they at times fail, for the flesh is weak though the spirit may be willing, the Mother of Sorrows will help them to rise again to the fragrant heights to plant there the old and noble standard of Catholic purity and Catholic chastity.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### PROGRESS

WE shall understand better the state of unrest and discontent in the world to-day if we call to mind the thoughts and feelings of the people who lived in the middle of the nineteenth century. The world to-day is discontented largely because it is disillusioned. It finds that it has not got what it was told it had every reason to expect, and it is disappointed.

By the middle of the nineteenth century physical science had already made great strides, and it gave promise of still greater advance in the future. Electricity had been applied to telegraphy, and steam to navigation and railways. The nations had been brought together as they never were before, commerce was growing and wealth was increasing beyond all precedent. Men were intoxicated by the advance in knowledge and in the application of science to the arts and conveniences of life. Faith in a future life had been shaken and weakened by the Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution. Many diverted their attention from the hope of a blissful

eternity in a life to come, and riveted it on the prospect of a life of complete happiness here on earth. Science, not faith, was henceforth to be the light of the world, and it was confidently foretold that science would guide mankind safely and surely to the gates of the earthly paradise. War was to be abolished and universal peace was to reign in its stead. The nations would emulate each other in the friendly rivalries of science and commerce, and would meet occasionally in the Parliament of Mankind to settle details connected with furthering the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Such ideas as these were held not only by many who cultivated literature and art; they were propagated among the working classes by means of mechanics' institutes, cheap and popular handbooks of science, and the Press.

For more than a century rationalists had been proclaiming and assiduously propagating a doctrine of Progress. They taught that the world had progressed, was progressing, and was destined to progress indefinitely in a desirable direction. The modern view, the scientific view, was totally different from those of the ancient world and of the Middle Ages. The ancients held that there had been four Ages of the world. First, a long time ago, came the Golden Age, when men lived on earth without toil or care, and in simple innocence. They conversed familiarly with the gods, and after death they went

to share their company. Then came the Silver Age, when a race much inferior to the men of the Golden Age lived; they slew each other and refused to worship the immortal gods. Then succeeded the Brazen Age, when men fierce and terrible lived. They loved war and violence and knew no pity. They too perished by each other's hands. Then arose the Iron Age, in which there is no rest from toil and care by day or by night. When things become so bad that father will quarrel with son and son with father, guest with host and brother with brother, when justice and peace have left the earth, then will God destroy this wicked race of men. Greece and Rome were agreed on this doctrine of degeneration: the age of greatest depravity and suffering is the last. India holds the same view. The Middle Ages held that the world is ruled and guided by Providence for the benefit of the elect in a life of future happiness. The rationalist view of Progress reverses the doctrine of the ancients. It places the Golden Age in the future not in the past. Not less does it differ from the views held in the Middle Ages. It teaches that man will attain complete and perfect happiness here on earth by his own efforts. It is not predicted that this end and justification of civilization will come about soon, but it will certainly come. It is not a truth that can be proved, but it cannot be denied. It is an article of scientific faith. The foregoing is a brief description of the

modern notion of Progress, whose history has recently been told by the Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge.* He tells us that it is the most potent of all the ideas that rule the modern world. It is the offspring of rationalism, and only dates from the first half of the eighteenth century. Obviously it is opposed to the Christian faith, and it was condemned in the Syllabus of Errors, issued by the Holy See in the year 1864.

Is it a doctrine that we can live by?

The state of the modern world gives the answer to that question. It is suffering from disillusion. With keener expectation, more ardent desire, and with more powerful means at its command, the world has again been repeating a very old experiment. From time immemorial men have been trying to make themselves contented and happy with the good things of this life. They have never succeeded. They have ever found that man's mind and man's heart are too large to be filled and satisfied with the goods of earth. The verdict after full trial has always been: "Vanity of vanity and all is vanity and vexation of spirit." The verdict is not only that of the Hebrew prophet: Greek and Roman philosophers and poets, as well as Eastern sages, all agree with it. But by the modern world the mistake and the falseness of the rationalistic doctrine of Progress is not as yet realized. It is pursuing a phantom, but it is getting

* *The Idea of Progress*, by Professor Bury.

very impatient on account of its failure to seize it. That is the danger of the situation.

Christians know where the remedy lies. God allowed the experiment to be tried in every form and by every method in the ancient world, and when the result was universally acknowledged to be pessimism, he sent Jesus Christ into the world to show it where true Progress lay and to what goal it led.

Rationalists acknowledge that the goal towards which the world is making progress cannot be known by us. Jesus Christ did not leave his followers in ignorance on so important a question. The goal of human destinies is not to be found on earth but in life everlasting. He preached life everlasting. He demanded unswerving faith in it, it was the key which explained his life of suffering, poverty, and obscurity; his resurrection to a new life was the sign which alone he vouchsafed to give the Scribes and Pharisees; the whole of Christianity rests on the truth of the Resurrection, and on that account he took special pains to confirm the faith of his Apostles in it. One of their main duties was to act as witnesses of his Resurrection. Life everlasting, then, is the goal. The way thither is to lead a good life, and to lead a good life means to make constant progress towards perfection. "Be ye perfect," he said, "even as your heavenly Father is perfect." Christians were called upon to imitate him. "I am the way." Everyone shall be perfect if he be as his

Master. For our instruction it was written of him that he advanced in wisdom, age, and grace before God and men. By their teaching and by their good example his followers were to be the light of the world, the salt of the earth, the leaven which by degrees was to permeate and elevate the whole lump. And because he knew the weakness of human nature he provided an abundant source of help in his grace.

From all this we see that Progress is a Christian idea and that it has been borrowed and distorted by the rationalists.

# INDEX


A

Abstinence, 2 *f.*
Affinity, 133 *ff.*; multiplied, 134
Augustine, St, 151, 162 *ff.*

B

Baptism, 35 *ff.*; parochial sacrament, 37; case of necessity, 38
Beatification, 170 *ff.*
Benefice, 17
Blessings, 94
Butler, Dom C., 142, 150, 151

C

Canonization, 170 *ff.*
Children, education of, 113
Communication with heretics, 130. *See* Non-Catholic Services
Communion, 43 *ff.*; age for, 43; persons forbidden, 44; fast before, 45; Easter, 45; frequent 48 *ff.*; conditions for frequent, 51 *ff.*; spiritual, 54
Company keeping, 117
Confirmation, 39 *ff.*; of obligation, 40; age for, 40
Consecrations, 94

D

Decency, public, 135 *ff.*
Devil's Advocate, 173

E

Ecstasy, 146
Excommunication, 106 *ff.*; effects of, 108 *f.*; of negligent parents, 114; and Protestant marriage, 130 *ff.*

F

Fasting, 2 *f.*

G

Godparents. *See* Sponsors

H

Home, Christian, 111 *ff.*

I

Indulgences, 70 *ff.*
Inge, Dean, 157

J

*Jura stolae*, 18 *ff.*

L

Law of Church changes, 1; of State canonized, 25 *ff.*; civil, and contracts, 28; and interest, 29; and minors, 29; formalities of, 29; and arbitration, 30; and adoption, 31; and prescription, 32 *f.*
Lent ends, 2; Sundays in, 2

M

Marriage, 111 *ff.*; ends of, 112; preparation for, 115 *ff.*; with unbaptized, 120 *ff.*; before priest, 124 *ff.*; impediments of, 121; in Protestant Church, 129 *ff.*
Mass for people, 55 *ff.*; days for saying, 61; and suppressed feasts, 61 *ff.*
Morality, standard of, 75 *ff.*
Mysticism, 154 *ff.*
Mystics' quest, 142 *ff.*; experiences, 145, 155, 169

N

Non-Catholic services, 21 *ff.* *See* Communication with Heretics

O

Orders, 88 *ff.*

P

Parish, 9; duties, 11; property, 14; a benefice, 17
Penance, 66; matter of, 67; minister of, 68; reception of, 68 *f.*
Perfection, 78
Plato, 153
Plotinus, 147, 158
Prescription, 33
Probabilism, 75
Progress and discontent, 185; and Rationalists, 187; and Christianity, 189

S

Sacramentals, 93 *ff.*
Sacraments. *See name of each;* and non-Catholics, 97 *ff.*; signs and bonds, 98
Sex problems, 177 *ff.*
Sick calls, 86
Societies, 137 *ff.*; forbidden, 138; religious, 140
Spirits, discernment of, 150 *ff.*
Sponsors at Baptism, 36; at Confirmation, 40 *ff.*

T

Time, 6 *ff.*

U

Unction, extreme, 84 *ff.*

V

Venerable, 175
Viaticum, 46
Vision of God, 144 *ff.*, 167
Vocation, 91

5851

260.4 Slater, T.

AUTHOR

S 631 Points of church law,

TITLE

260.4
S631

5851